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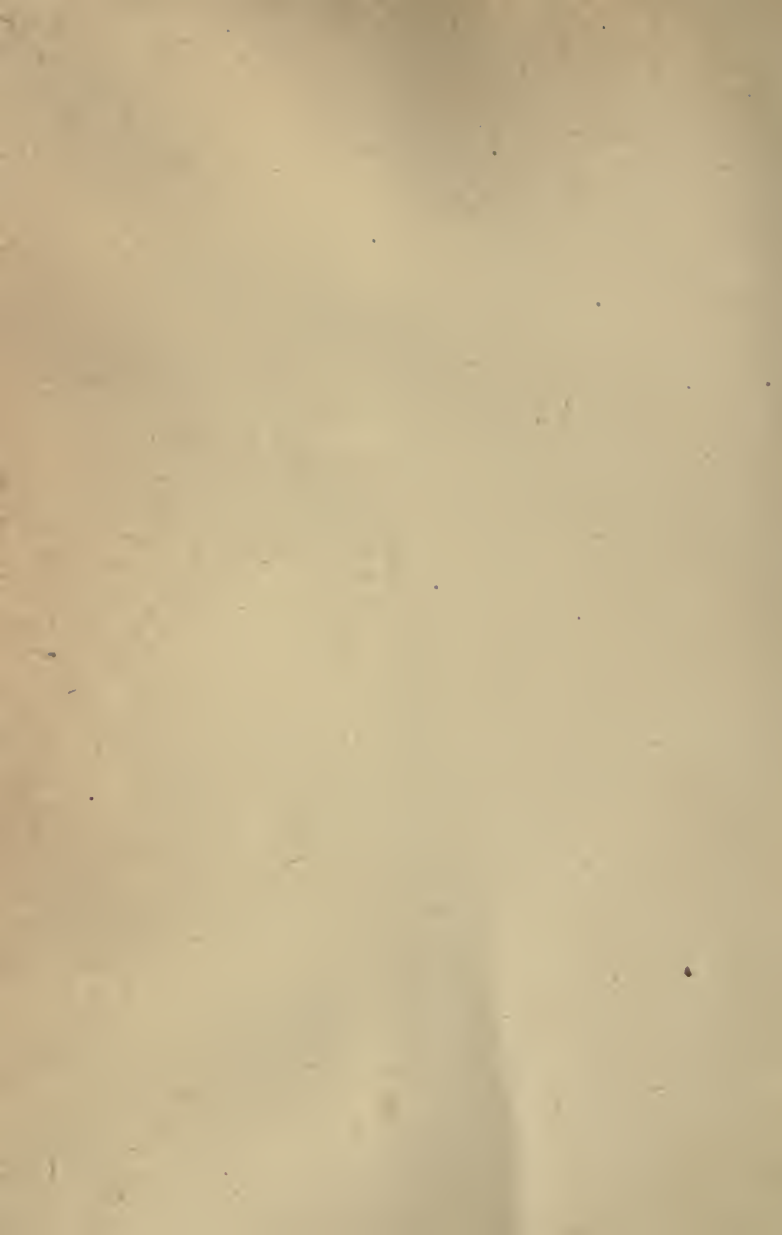


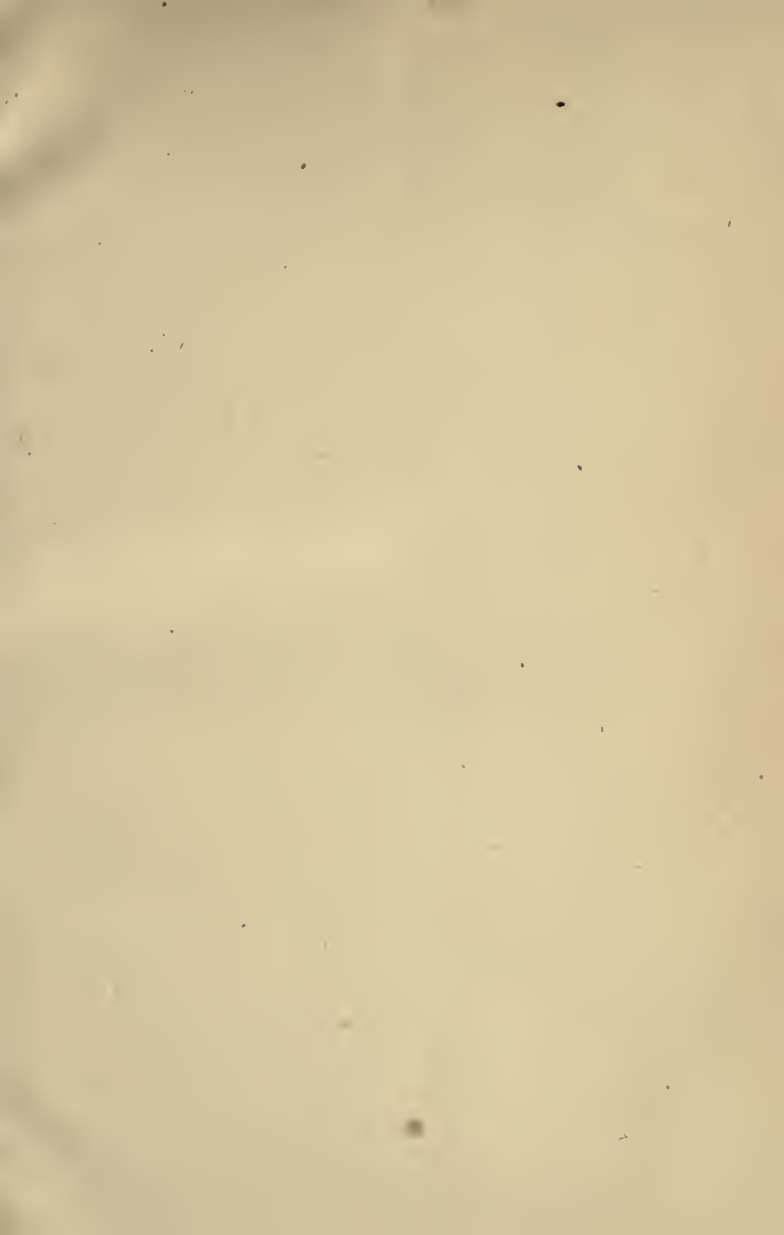


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J. Haven

# CHRISTUS CONSOLATOR

OR

## COMFORTABLE WORDS FOR BURDENED HEARTS

BY

GILBERT HAVEN

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## PREFACE.

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SOME months before my father left us to be "forever with the Lord" he prepared for the press the following papers, which he purposed publishing under the title given to this volume. He believed, without a shadow of doubt, in the comfortable revelations of the Holy Scriptures, and he has here set forth the message of our Lord to burdened hearts.

I have recently revised the manuscript and added some notes that may be of interest to the reader.

I hope that these utterances of faith and trust may bring to many hearts the Easter joy that comforted him from whose heart they came.

WILLIAM INGRAHAM HAVEN.

*Boston, Mass., Easter, 1893.*





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“The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from heaven.”—1 Cor. xv, 47.

“Ye stars are but the shining dust  
Of my divine abode,  
The pavements of those heavenly courts  
Where I shall reign with God.

“The Father of eternal light  
Shall then his beams display,  
Nor shall one moment's darkness mix  
With that unvaried day.”

I.

TWO GREEK BOOKS ON THE LIFE  
BEYOND.

WHILE hastening on the sad errand of a funeral to my native home and parental roof, I beguiled the tedium of travel and the sorrowfulness of heart with readings by the way. I had two books with me, in which I daily buried the slowly flying hours—the “Odyssey” of Homer and the New Testament. I had come, in the reading of the former in course, to the visit of Ulysses to the realm of departed spirits, and my mind naturally wandered in the other among those passages that talk of the world unseen. You can hardly imagine the contrast. Both works written in the same language, both composed by men of the highest capacity, both treating on the same subject, and both solemnly considering this theme; but how different each from the other! How vast the space that separates these two creations!

I am not going to ask you to look on the one

book as different in origin from the other. Let them both be considered as sacred—I cannot say as divine, for they are too far apart from each other for both to be divine. Let them both be considered as honest efforts of their authors. Then see how immense the contrast. The story of Homer, it should be said, has been long esteemed divine. At the very time Christ came it had such a reputation. So it may be contrasted as the best specimen of the false divine without revelation and without Christ, with the correlative specimen of the true divine by revelation and in Christ.

No one will deny the superior rank of Homer. General consent makes him the chief of pagan poets. By pagan I do not mean a word of reproach, but of necessity. They are the poets who never had direct light from Christian revelation. He ranks every Hindoo poet in clearness, positiveness, imagination, rhythm, and that highest of faculties, the perfect bringing forth of things unknown and unseen. He ranks every Persian and Arabian writer, every Egyptian and Phœnician poet, by immeasurable breadths. He has no successor in lucidity, a shining clearness, force, and

sweetness of vision, among all the writers of Greek and Roman fame. He is sovereign in these realms everywhere, and to this day.

He is, therefore, no weak and ignorant illustration of the condition of man without revelation. He is the best possible illustration of this condition in the human race. By universal suffrage he is put at the head of the writers on whom the legacy of Christianity and the word of God never directly came.

We may, therefore, turn away from all lower guesses at the secret of the grave, incoherent mumblings which fill volumes of heathen lore, in all tongues and ages, and which have been laboriously gathered up in the large volume entitled *History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, which volume contains neither the doctrine nor history of that truth and life. We need not seek through all these realms of shade for gross and feeble guesses at the truth. Homer is their best representative; elected by unanimous suffrage, he stands forth their chief. He is sufficient for this place.

Nor should we bring to this theme our own information, gathered from centuries of Christian education, which has created an atmos-

phere and made us something other than nature-people looking at this problem of the grave with nature-eyes. We must get out of ourselves, go back from the light of Christianity, and the immeasurable forms and powers in which it has manifested itself, and enter the realm where Christianity is not, nor ever was—the realm of pure human nature, or as near that realm as it is possible to get ; for perfect nature without a ray from the Gospel sun it is impossible to find. Christ is the light, and has always been the light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and no age or race is completely without his illuminations. Yet these rays are not direct ; they give no sight of the sun. They are not traceable directly to the word of God. They are not to be accounted as scripturally revealed. They are classed under the head of nature.

If, therefore, you would see how you would be, how all have been, in the darkness of unrev-  
elation, read this story of the visit of Ulysses to the realm of the dead ; then turn to the pages of that other Greek book, and see how wonderful the contrast—midnight at its uttermost darkness, and midday in its perfection of

glory. You will also notice how clear are the limitations of that light, what you can see, and what you cannot see, and rejoice in Him who has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."

This is the story of Homer: Ulysses, having been confined a prisoner by the arts of Circe for many long months, begged to be allowed to go home. She granted him permission, but told him he must first visit the abode of the dead and inquire of a dead soothsayer as to his future. If, however, Homer wrote, as some think—and as even Gladstone, his last and best commentator, thinks—not far from the time of Saul, it shows how general at that age was the idea of learning the future from departed spirits; the errands of Ulysses and Saul to Tiresias and Samuel being almost identical.

Under her direction he sails from her island straight to the land of shades, Cimmeria, whence comes our familiar Cimmerian darkness, crying himself, as with his companions he is borne unwillingly to this "land of

deepest shade, unpierced by human thought." Thus Bryant translates his description of that country :

" There lies the land, and there the people dwell  
Of the Cimmerians, in eternal cloud  
And darkness. Never does the glorious sun  
Look on them with his rays, when he goes up  
Into the starry sky, nor when again  
He sinks from heaven to earth. Unwholesome night  
O'erhangs the wretched race."

Into this thick darkness he comes, lands, digs a trench, pours into it the blood of a black sheep, and the ghosts come thronging round, eager to taste the blood, which was requisite before they could acquire the gift of speech. He sees naught here but shades. No human being lands on that strand. But how bitter the wails of these trooping ghosts :

" Thronging around me came the  
Souls of the dead from Erebus—young wives  
And maids unwedded, men worn out with years  
And toil, and virgins of a tender age  
In their new grief, and many a warrior slain  
In battle, mangled by the spear and clad  
In bloody armor, who about the trench  
Flitted on every side, now here, now there,  
With gibbering cries, and I grew pale with fear."

Bear in mind the universal unhappiness of these spirits. Not one is in heaven. It is



Cimmeria, a shade, and they its shadows. The first he spoke with was one of his companions, who a day or two before, drunk, had fallen off a roof, where he was slumbering, missed the stairway and broke his neck. "The phantom sobbed" its reply, and weeping and wailing told how he was slain.

Then came his mother. She drank the blood which enabled her to speak, and told in piteous tones her piteous state. She asks:

"How didst thou come, my child, a living man,  
Into this place of darkness? Difficult  
It is for those who breathe the breath of life  
To visit these abodes, through which are rolled  
Great rivers, fearful floods."

How sad the confession! His own mother, high-born and gentle-hearted, in the place of darkness! Think you had Ulysses had a better faith he would not have applied it to his own mother? Would he have had her shivering in the mists of darkness at the door of the pit could he have placed her on more shining seats? She tells the story of her death as any one on earth might describe a lingering sickness up to its fatal end. He sought to press her in his arms, but "the form passed

through them like a shadow or a dream." He begged a more solid embrace. She sadly tells the story of the dead.

"'Tis the lot of all our race  
When they are dead. No more the sinews bend  
The bones and flesh, when once from the white bones  
The life departs. Then like a dream the soul  
Flies off, and flits about from place to place."

That is the utmost of his knowledge of the dead. The soul flits hither and thither like a dream, and always in and with darkness. His talks with other dames of high degree reveal no further light on that state. Each discourses on her earthly state. Each is still of the earth, earthy. No Lord from heaven breaks in on the scene and dissipates the gloom of the grave.

The men, he said, were in as lamentable a plight as the women. Agamemnon, when he had drank the blood,

"Wailed aloud, and, bursting into tears,  
Stretched out his hand to touch me ; but no power  
Was there of grasp or pressure, such as once  
Dwelt in those active limbs. I could not help  
But weep at sight of him, for from my heart  
I pitied him."

Such is the aspect of the chief of the men whom Ulysses had known—King of the Greeks,

head of their armies. In conversing together they confined themselves to the past. There was no present and no future. "Thus in sad talk we stood, and freely flowed our tears."

Achilles, the greatest of the Greeks, the pet hero of Homer, draws near. He alone, save Tiresias, was in superior abodes. He ruled among the dead, yet he declared of his condition :

" Noble Ulysses, speak not thus of death,  
As if thou couldst console me. I would be  
A laborer on earth, and serve for hire  
Some man of mean estate, who makes scant cheer,  
Rather than reign o'er all who have gone down  
To death."

How powerful his confession! How it tells against those who declare there is no light in revelation, no difference between Christian and antichristian states! To be alive, the slave of the meanest man, is better than to rule over all the mighty dead.

This is the gift of the greatest of the Grecians to his people; his best, his only glimpse into the world beyond. This is the brightest flower of Greek philosophy, art, literature, arms, religion. The rest of the story is no better. He sees famous criminals: Sisyphus rolling

the ever-rolling stone, Tantalus tantalized with his thirst and its impossible relief, Tityus devoured by vultures that never cease to eat his ever-growing vitals. He cries out with fear :

“ And now there flocked  
Already round me, with a mighty noise,  
The innumerable nations of the dead.”

Affrighted, he escapes to his ship of the earth.

This is one Greek book on the future state. It is the best that nation afforded to its people. It is better than any other nation, without the Bible, afforded its people. It never improved to the days of Christ. Plato adds no light to Homer. Socrates leaves off his discussion with a guess ; he has no real knowledge. Virgil has Elysian fields, but the most of his spirits fail to enter them, and his crowd of ghosts are almost identical with Homer's, a thousand years apart in time, but not a moment in knowledge.

The Greek people were fed on this food. This story was first told by Ulysses at a royal banquet. I think how sadly those hearers must have listened : those ladies of the court, hearing these sorrows of the great dames of Greece ; those heroic men, the mournful state of

their historic heroes, and feeling that this fate of their fathers and mothers was to be their own. What was there to stimulate faith in these stories—truths to them of the most sacred sort? Tell me, ye who fancy light can come from other sources than the word of God—ye who believe in Emerson and Tyn-dall and other lesser lights who rule your night, and make it darker—is there any light at all in your philosophy superior to that which shone over the Achaians' halls, where Ulysses recited this mournful tale? Has humanity any glimpse of those fields Elysian which was not granted to this blind seer and singer? Leave out to-day the light of the Gospel, and men gather now drearily in seances, and get chilling grasps of dead friends' hands, and hear sad wailings of their present state. There is not a step ahead in the seance of to-day from the Ulyssean visit three thousand years ago. Not long since I heard one tell how a spirit visited him through a medium, who bewailed her miserable fate, beaten and buffeted and spit upon by her companions, a modern blackness of darkness as mournful as that in which these spirits wandered. That was their best. Those

who are reported better off are still material, earthy, as fond of life and crying for it as strongly as did Achilles. "The first man is of the earth, earthy." He can never rise above that condition. He is dragged down by his ignorance and his sin. He fears death itself. He fears its revelations. "The fears of the tomb," Campbell rightly calls it; or, as Job more powerfully says, "The land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness," or darkness that is darkness; "and of the shadow of death," the shade of the death-shade, ghost of ghost, terror of terror, hades of hades, "without any order," the chaos of nature, "and where the light is as darkness." How terrible the picture! The very light itself makes only a deeper night. Yet this is not as terrible as the truth. To this day, with a line of a hundred ancestors standing between us and those who listened to Ulysses and Job, there is no more beauty in the grave itself, in death or the dead body, than there was then. The body is still an object of fear and repulsion. We hasten to bury it out of our sight. It becomes fetidness and dust. You adorn it with flowers, make your

cemeteries beautiful parks, the most beautiful of parks, and still your graveyard is not a delightsome thing. It is chaos come again, the worst chaos because superinduced upon the best cosmos. No order like that of comely man and woman; no disorder like their destruction. What shall change this view that nature gives—so dreary, so desolate, so fearful, so horrible?

What? Listen! There is another Greek book, the work of several penmen, some native to the tongue, most foreign, written about two thirds of the time back between us and Homer, nearer to his age by a thousand years than to ours. It does not profess to have his graces of rhythm or his varied and vivid fancy. It has never been translated by poets, nor is it a favorite with mere philosophers without faith. Yet for clearness of view, simplicity of statement, reach of faith, grandeur of imagination, and solidity of confidence, all that all the world has elsewhere said or sung is naught, and worse, to its infinitude of strength.

The Lord from heaven is the second man. He has come; he has brought life and immortality to light. He has shed the sunlight of

the throne in the barrows of the dead. He has walked in Cimmeria, and made it bright as the beams of the morning. He has revealed to us the happy fields, and shown us who walk together there. He has even taken the dusty earth from its coffin and urn, and made it animate with eternal life and glory. How wondrous the change! See how early it begins in this second Greek book. Hardly is his advent announced that this fact is not announced with it. Before the sun appears in form his radiance shines. "Far off his coming shone." In exultant song Zacharias declares, "The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." This was before He was born—the Divine Ulysses—who was not only to visit the dead, but to destroy death itself.

The acclaim of the angels announcing, "Peace on earth" to good-willing men, was in the same key. Peace and good-will must cover death, or there is no peace.

Then come the words and works of the Master, lifting dead bodies from their couches into all the fullness of their lost health, call-



ing them back from loathsome corruption into serene and solid beauty. Then come his words, fit accompaniment for such works: "I am the resurrection, and the life: . . . whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But he spake of the temple of his body." "I lay down my life of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." What august, what awful power is here! Tenderer are other words: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many man-

sions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." How infinitely different this from Achilles striding off over the meadows, leaving his mournful inferiors shivering in the darkness!

Christ, our Leader, does not thus stride gloomily and haughtily away. He talks to his companions, who are tearful and affrighted, in the most cheering manner. Before he goes to Gethsemane, to the agonies and bloody death, which he saw and would not flee, for four chapters, which must have been for an hour, he enlarges on cheering and helpful themes. He tells them for the first time distinctly about the third Person in the Trinity, and unfolds his twofold character and work—Sanctifier and Comforter; especially the latter, as they were to be in especial need of the latter. Being divine, and after these bold and cheerful words, to prove they were no mere boast, he condescends to die. Weakest of the weak he mounts the cross. He lays down his life as powerless as a babe. Death hath complete dominion over him. He wrestles not. He

puts forth no effort to save himself. He does not even toss and writhe in natural resistance to his fate. Never was a babe's death quicker or easier. "Pilate marveled if he were already dead." He goes, not like Ulysses, and Orpheus, and Hercules, alive to hades; but, like every other man, he goes dead. Those myths never affect the world's heart, because they do not suffer the world's experience. Christ suffers unto death, suffers the severest agonies, which everybody dreads, and dies the quietest and easiest in these very agonies. He touches every experience in that hour of agony and utter weakness. How different this from Hercules marching in hades! The one strongest of the strong, and in the very towering of his strength; the other weakest of the weak, and in the very weakest of his weakness, he sinks into the power of death. No shade so thin wanders about the pit of Ulysses. They have a show of strength, he none.

The victory is complete. Never more so; the dead body hangs a perfect corpse. It is taken down limp and clammy—dead. It is stretched as such; bathed, washed, wrapped, and borne off as such. You know their help-

lessness by many a sad experience. He is shut up in the tomb. Locked is the door, a great stone rolled before it, sealed, and watched by a band of soldiers. Can Death ask for a better compliance with his conditions? It is done as he has commanded, perfectly done, satisfactorily done; governor and king and chief priest are content. The devil can conceive of nothing further. His victory is complete. He has killed and entombed the Son of God. Hercules, the Mighty, lies slain among his foes. Ulysses, the Wise, is outwitted by his enemies. They accept their victory and are satisfied. When lo! he is not here! He is arisen! He is gone! Death is outwitted, overmastered. Out of this all-eater of man cometh forth meat for the reanimation of all men. Out of the grave he marches serene and calm and mighty. Death hath no more dominion over him, nor over his. He has done it. Not fable, not poetry, not marvelous rhythm, but fact—most marvelous fact! Everybody rushes to him. He is lifted up triumphant over death. He draws all men unto him. Then comes the application of this victory. His words, his works, his own divine deed,

begin to tell on the world about. He ascends to heaven, a thing easily to be done after ascending from the tomb, and the story flies through the world. "Jesus and the resurrection" his disciples preach, and everybody hears. Some reject, some despise, some hate; all hear. Persecutions arise, but they hear the more, "Jesus and the resurrection." Death comes violently, but they hear the more yet. For before the assembled authorities and populace of Jerusalem—on the very spot possibly where Jesus sank powerless in the grasp of death—the first of his newly converted preachers and disciples, probably a convert of the Pentecostal days, his first witness, declares with his dying lips that his dying eyes behold "Jesus sitting at the right hand of God," and he asks him to receive his spirit. How different this from Homeric darkness, from Socratic guess! No wailing ghost here, no wandering shade here, seeking to taste a drop of blood that it may tell its woes to mortal ears. "Receive my spirit;" and having so said, he fell asleep. Asleep his body, received his spirit into Jesus's arms. He who a few weeks before had said to a dying neighbor, "This day

shalt thou be with me in paradise," saw the servant who looked up,

"And from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face."

Not only God's glory, but the very countenance of God, the face of Jesus Christ, smiled upon his disciple, who fell asleep as a tired babe falls asleep in its mother's arms, while she smiles her benedictions into its weary eyes.

Thenceforward fled the mighty word over the realms where Homer sung, over the realms where Ulysses sailed, around the great sea, and over the voluptuous East, and into the icy North—the word flew, "Jesus and the resurrection." The future of man is secure. He shall come forth. He shall renew himself in glory everlasting.

Then came the letters of argument and consolation: letters describing the intermediate conditions, so far as description is permitted and allowable; letters limiting the wildness of the human fancy and human hope within due bounds; letters suggesting the time and manner of this advent, yet equally careful to abstain from too great detail. How wonderful

are some of their passages! Read them by the side of Homer's lines, and how his graceful rhythms wither and decay! "We know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "We know!" No Greek before them ever knew—nay, ever dared to guess—this sublime fact. "For me to die is gain." Socrates and Cicero never dared say that, nor Homer, nor Achilles. "Gain?" "Gain?" "To die, gain?" Whence know you this? Only because the Lord from heaven hath come from heaven, and hath transformed the earthly into the heavenly.

That fifteenth of First Corinthians, written to the most sensual and voluptuous city of Greece, how it shoots its light across the ages of the grave and shines bright over its farther gate! How it lifts up that graceless city through its saints into the heights of grace! How it riddles all mere psychical ascension and every attempt to abolish the bodily resurrection! How it sets forth with undying strength the steady assurance that our dead bodies shall live again! What a shout it sends through the hollow depths of hades! "O

death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." What a change from the tearful, wailing shades of Homer's heaven to this burst of rapture!

That is the new Greek against the old; Christian against heathen; God against Satan. These passages grow denser and more delightful as we draw toward the close. The letters have more in them than the gospels, Corinthians than Romans, John than Paul; and all consummate themselves in the grandest book in the world, the Revelation. What care we that we cannot understand its trumpets and vials and horsemen and horns? We cannot understand the convolutions of symphony, but we can the gentle melody that purls through the roaring, surging, upheaving mass of song. So through this book runs every stream of melody—the beatitude of the spirits of the holy dead. It opens with the promises of this bliss: "These shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." "They shall sit on my throne." They shall be led to "living foun-



tains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The old grand Greek saw only tears in the eyes of the dead; his mother, his leader, his servant, his greatest soldier, Hercules himself—all wail and weep. But the new grander Greek sees God wiping away all tears. Think how changed that book had Ulysses seen Jupiter wiping away his mother's tears. And so on and on through this book of disclosure appear harpers harping on their harps; crowds on a sea of glass mingled with fire, yet never breaking nor burning; rivers of water of life; trees laden with precious fruits, which drop their richness every month, until the glorious golden city breaks on our view, descending from God out of heaven, with its gigantic gates, each of a single pearl, its wall of specified precious stones, its light the Lamb, its temple the Lord God, its people the saints of the Most High.

Here we must pause. How infinite the distance from Ulysses crying as he is drawn into dark Cimmeria and fleeing from its multitude of ghosts, "the innumerable nations of the dead," and John talking with the angel who measures the city, and beholding its inhabitants,

and listening to their songs! That is the change wrought in the race of man by the Gospel. That is the immortality Christ has brought to light. That is the Lord from heaven already dwelling among men and giving them a joy of peace and assurance such as never could otherwise be known.

Three things, among many, we pause to notice :

First, that the consummation of this triumph is at the resurrection. Homer never dreamed that those spirits would be reunited to their bodies. The most he hoped for was a happy home sometime for some spirits. But the Gospel laughs at impossibilities and leaps chasms that Nature never dare look into. It puts the crowning glories at and after the raised, revived, and glorified body is reunited to its spirit. That is its objective point. Thither it tends. There it gazes. That is its goal and beginning of glory. Christ put his death and resurrection within forty-eight hours of each other. He puts ours ages apart. What of it? The science that can connect the two ends of a laboratory table with the magnetic spark can gird the world with its flame. Christ can raise

himself in one day and portions of two. He can raise us if millions of years intervene. Thus and then he will show forth his glory. He reserves the highest splendors for that crowning hour.

But, second, the time between is spent deliciously ; whether asleep he does well, whether awake he does well ; all is well. The intermediate state is not dwelt upon as the post-resurrection state, but it is sufficiently delineated to show that it is a state of peace. Happy on Jesus's breast to lie and in his smile to bask! No Christian can find a gloomy thought in the reference to the blessed dead. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ;" not shall be—"are." "They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." The gloom of Job, which his faith defied, but could not abolish, is all gone in the New Testament. Stephen goes home rejoicing ; Paul exults in the day of deliverance ; Peter looks for and hastens after the coming of the Lord ; John sees own sonship changing into his likeness when he shall appear. All are serene, happy, jubilant. The intermediate world to a Christian is a world of life and love. It is delightful, it is desirable. Let

your heart rest in peace, in the confidence that "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

Third, this hope is limited; Ulysses makes no limit in virtue and vice. His characters boast, in hades, of the vilest amours. Achilles, who rules below, is there, as above, a polluted chief; while his own mother wails in outer darkness. But 'tis not so in the Christian's future world. The discriminations are sharp. Some shall arise to shame and everlasting contempt. What a shame of soul is that! How terrible may this awakening be! A fallen minister, driven by remorse, withdrew to commit suicide, when the thought of that doom rolled over his soul. "Shame and everlasting contempt," he kept repeating to himself; "Shame and everlasting contempt." He shrank back from a further and an eternal plunge into that abyss, and was saved, though not from present shame and contempt. Take heed, O great man, lest you awake to that terrible doom! You may ride in your lordly carriage through lordly ways; you may be the proud and petted head of grand society; but if your life is false and corrupt, you shall surely awake

that resurrection morning to shame and everlasting contempt. God help you to avoid that terrible doom! Some shall have a resurrection to damnation. Who? They that have done evil.

“Blessed are they that . . . have right to the tree of life, and . . . enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever maketh and loveth a lie.” How sharp the lines!

The Christian's heaven is no mixed, promiscuous muddle, like a world's town, and sometimes like a world's church. It is separate, seclusive. Forever so: “He that is filthy, shall be filthy still; he that is holy, shall be holy still.” See to it that you accept the book of God, the only revealer of the life beyond. Accept it with its own limitations. Accept it in honest fear of falling. Accept it in humble hope of standing. Accept it in joyful assurance of possessing heaven. Accept it for your consolation, for your perfection in righteousness. What things we have seen enter these realms. Yet all who have entered in Christ are in him to-day, and shall grow in bliss

till the ripening hour of the resurrection, when the Lord from heaven shall again appear, take the earthy with the heavenly, and take both earth and spirit in its new and heavenly unit unto the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, the glory everlasting. Wherefore comfort one another with these words :

“ Weep for your dead no more ;  
Friends, be of joyful cheer ;  
Our star moves on before,  
Our narrow path shines clear.

“ Now is His truth revealed,  
His majesty and might ;  
The grave has been unsealed ;  
Christ is our life and light !

“ His victory has destroyed  
The shaft that once could slay ;  
Sing praise ! the tomb is void  
Where the Redeemer lay.”



“Clouds and darkness are round about him.”—Psalm  
xcvii, 2.

“God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”—I John  
i, 5.

“O Father of eternal life, and all  
Created glories under thee!  
Resume thy Spirit from this world of thrall  
Into true liberty.

“Either disperse these mists which blot and fill  
My perspective still as they pass,  
Or else remove me hence unto that hill  
Where I shall need no glass.”



## II.

### GOD HIDING AND REVEALING HIMSELF.

**W**E are embosomed in mystery. In whatever direction we turn our gaze it is lost in clouds and darkness. However eagerly we pursue a path which we think is flooded with light we soon find our way lost in the thick darkness. Within and around every brilliant truth lie immeasurable clouds. The faint increase of knowledge only makes the gloom in which it is involved the denser.

In our childhood the feebleness of the light is scarcely sufficient to dissipate the fogs that surround the intellect. If heaven lies about us in our infancy, it is only in the intuitions of infancy. The clouds that gather around the growing boy belong to his condition. He is the white paper of the philosopher, the unwritten tablet, ignorant of the world into which he has so unceremoniously entered. But after all his strivings after knowledge and attainments, then the babe of barbarians, if the first philosopher of the first schools, must

still confess the infinitude of the darkness that lies about him. The clear-seeing is not necessarily the far-seeing. In truth, no class are so skeptical as those who profess the largest scientific attainments, no class so readily acknowledge their ignorance as those the most scientifically learned. We affirm the more readily the more we know that ignorance veils the cause of all the phenomena that address our attention. We confess that we are utterly unable to rend the robe in which Nature conceals herself. The more passionate our endeavor to get at the heart of the mystery, the more swiftly and surely does she elude our grasp and present to baffled efforts the same impenetrable guise.

Under such conditions of being, with acknowledged inability to pierce to their depths the shallow recesses of our own nature or of the created world about us, it is natural that the infinite God should surround himself to our comprehension with clouds and darkness. The weakness we feel in our attempts to examine into our own nature leads us irresistibly to the conclusion that every avenue of approach to God is shrouded in yet deeper darkness and

mystery. We find, therefore, that in whatever way we seek to contemplate him he hides himself steadily from our view.

I. If we consider his nature, we must acknowledge that we can obtain but faint glimpses of him.

The Essence or Spirit which we call God, and which we acknowledge to contain infinite attributes, in its activity or mode of existence is deeply mysterious. How his personality can agree with his ubiquity, how he can be everywhere at the same time, superintend all concerns, sustain all existences, execute all purposes at each and every moment, is far beyond our power to comprehend. Our consciousness can be exercised only on a single object at a time. Though the mind may be entertaining a thousand guests, it can direct its attention to them only singly. But such a contraction is not imposed on God. He is not obliged to neglect all other interests for the purpose of rightly attending to one. He can exert his power in creating new and directing old worlds, in thrusting out vegetation in its innumerable forms upon the earth, and sending forth innumerable worlds into space. How

this can be is too wonderful for us. It is high ; we cannot attain unto it.

No less mysterious are his omniscience and omnipotence. He is not present as a mere atom or breeze, or mindless thing ; he is present everywhere, knowing everything and controlling everything. This is also far beyond our thoughts. It cannot be reduced to our measurements. We can prove the necessity of such a nature, we can see that only by possessing it can he be God ; that through it alone can he keep in regular action the works of his own hands ; through it alone can he give the created soul confidence in the immutability of his purposes and thus afford it consolation and strength. This irradiates all the darkness around us with light divine ; this destroys our fears that we are victims of mere chance, which may shoot us whither it blindly pleases, like gusts of a whirlwind, which themselves do not know whence they come or whither they go. Binding the universe harmoniously together, giving it a power and wisdom and love which are infinite and ceaseless, imparting to every atom of space and every moment of eternity a directing, vivifying spirit,

this nature of God presents the whole creation as animated by one soul, created for one end, governed by one law, and reposing in the arms of one Power. Yet in itself this Power is hidden from our gaze. This source of all light is the center of deepest darkness. As has been sublimely remarked: "How the divine Being himself exists in an essential and eternal nature of his own, without beginning as well as without end; how he can be present at the same moment in every point of illimitable space without excluding any one of his creatures from the room it occupies; how, unseen, unfelt by all, he can maintain a pervading and intimate acquaintance and contact with all parts and portions of the universe; how he can at once be all eye, all ear, all presence, all energy, yet interfere with none of the perceptions and actions of his creatures—this is what equally baffles the mightiest and the meanest intellect; this is the great mystery of the universe, which is at once the most certain and the most incomprehensible of all things—a truth at once enveloped in a flood of light and an abyss of darkness! Inexplicable itself, it explains all beside. It casts a clearness on every ques-

tion, accounts for every phenomenon, solves every problem, illuminates every depth, and renders the whole mystery of existence as perfectly simple as it is otherwise perfectly unintelligible, while itself alone remains in impenetrable obscurity. After displacing every other difficulty it remains the greatest of all, in solitary, insurmountable, unapproachable grandeur."

II. But his works are a mystery. Not only is his own nature past finding out, his works partake of that same mystery. We find ourselves placed in the midst of material creation existing under unnumbered if not innumerable forms, instinct with different degrees of life, or, if destitute of all vitality, still marvelously diverse in that unvitalized condition, every stone as every star differing from every other stone as well as star in glory; subject to varied laws, now completely controlling them, now allowing them some voluntary action under general supervision. We see that these particles combine according to fixed laws, to which they are in their lowest workings blindly subject; that, as they gradually arise from this condition, they become more and more imbued with vitalizing, conscious elements, until at

last in man is revealed a new power which ranks him infinitely above his fellows—a power to combine and to separate, to break old bonds and to form new alliances; a power to reason, to imagine, to construct out of spiritual elements a spiritual building. Yet around all these material and spiritual works is cast a thick veil. What is man? man must yet say to himself. What is this tiniest work, this first step in creation, this molecule or atom of science? He pauses in vain for a reply. If the atom answers not, much less will its motion, its crystallization, its vitalization, its animalization answer. All nature is dumb. The sphinx devours, but does not enlighten, her man-child. In a score or two of years—a mere hand's breadth—he is again of her dust out of which she formed him, returned to his primordial estate, to the original atom, to his native dust. But Nature, even then, speaks not. 'Tis mystery all. How vain is science! We may modify the familiar lines:

“How vain is science here below,  
How false, and yet how fair!”

How seductive, how treacherous! How alluring, how disappointing! It is not science; it

is a dream of science. That means knowledge ; this is ignorance. God's omniscience is man's omnescience. His all-knowing is our all-not-knowing. Knowledge in part is real ignorance. See how this cloud thickens about us. The mode by which creation has been called into being and by which it is sustained in being is beyond our comprehension. We have senses by which we discern its existence ; we have learned through some who advanced beyond ourselves in their investigations certain facts concerning it and certain laws governing it ; but with all this knowledge we are in a state of blindness and darkness. We catch but faint glimpses of the range of creation and pierce but slightly into its depths. It is still to us clouds and darkness.

How deep, too, is the mystery connected with our own nature ! Our soul—what is it ? How united with the body ? How do we think the thoughts ever passing through the brain ? How feel the feelings ever throbbing in the heart ? How do we propel upon the air in speech or from the eye in glances their inward and spiritual movements ? How does this articulated air and soulful glance awaken



thought and emotion in other souls through like organs of flesh? Nay, how acts the soul upon itself, in communings, repentings, resolvings, inner and solitary weepings and rejoicings, all this strangest and deepest of life, with which no stranger can intermeddle, which goes on beneath a sleeping, or, if awake, a calm and unrevealing exterior, like a cool sentinel guarding at a gate within whose palace every sort of a scene is going forward, festival and funeral, fightings and banquetings? This is marvel of marvels so far as concerns the works of God. We sink down appalled before our own hidden selves. We flee from the being which we are. Thus the world without and that within make us tremble as in the thick darkness. Around us roll the waves of created life, deeper, wider, more fearful than the ocean. Our little bark swims on surrounding waters, soon to be engulfed in their relentless abysses. As it skims the dread surface by the aid of the slight glimmerings of knowledge, it sees neither the unfathomed depths nor the far-distant shores.

We may see God, in his attributes, in these regular motions of his universe. We may revere his power and wisdom and knowledge,

but, with all the discernment we can acquire, we are still compelled to confess that clouds and darkness are round about him. Retired within the secrets of his own nature, surrounded by the mysteries of mysteries which close up every avenue of approach, he issues his edicts, calls into being creatures fashioned with infinite skill, and leaves them to wander forward, forever gaining vast stores of information, and yet, with every accumulation, compelled the more despairingly to cry out, "Clouds and darkness are round about *him*," confessing, in prostration of pride and conceit, that their increasing faculties only increase the consciousness of their own weakness, that increasing light only causes a profounder gloom to gather around the very source of all intelligence. The most undevout astronomer, the most daring skeptic of science, the most defiant student of the world of matter apprehensible to our capacities, has to cry out in mortification of spirit, "We are of yesterday, and know nothing." Lo! these are but parts of his ways; but the thunder of his power who can understand?

III. He is mysterious in his providences.

By providence is meant that apparent interference with the ordinary laws of nature, not the extraordinary interposition of his power, working evidently against ordinary laws for the confirmation or refutation of a doctrine or supposed duty. Such workings contrary to natural law were witnessed in the miracles scattered through the word of God from the days of Moses to those of Paul, consummating themselves in the deeds of Christ. Such miracles are attestations of his power over his own works, and his determination to make these lower forces servants of his highest purposes, teachers by their dumb obedience of the Gospel of salvation. They, of course, are far beyond all human investigation. They are the hiddenmost exercises of the will of God. They can probably in no world or future be apprehended by any creature. The angels may forever vainly endeavor to look into that lowest of the mysteries connected with the work of redeeming souls—the reversal or suspension of the laws of matter. Miracles are not subject, and never will be, to the tests of the laboratory or the dialectics of the disputer. They must be rejected with sneering contempt that only

proves the folly of the rejecter, or accepted in all their fullness of demand with a like fullness of faith.

But these exhibitions of God, "with clouds and darkness," are not among those regular disclosures of himself that wrap us round with a veil of perplexity. If we consider him in the larger providences that affect the weal of nations, we see but parts of his ways. Why one people rise and another fall, how Greece shot out so suddenly into the front rank of the world and disappeared as suddenly, its whole reign not covering half a millennium from Achilles to Alexander, is a mystery no student of that mighty people can possibly solve. Gladstone confesses his ignorance. Others less competent can wisely confess theirs. Why America lay concealed for thousands of years, only a few days' run from a continent teeming with intensest life, separated by soft waves and currents that a sailboat can traverse, is another inexplicable mystery. We can see God raising up nations out of barbarism, allowing them to sweep over the earth in a torrent of desolating war, giving them vast wealth and power, and then allowing seeds of decay to flourish in

their system, sap the foundations of their gorgeous power, and leave them a desolation and mockery, while to another people possessing superior or different traits is given the reins of power, like them to rise to a similar, perhaps superior glory, like them to fall to an equal, perhaps lower degradation.

In all these changes has been seen most clearly the hand of God, the operation of fixed laws directed by his wisdom. Yet even here, where nothing is miraculous, everything is mysterious. Clouds and darkness hang thick around him. We know not why he allows such misery to accompany this rise and fall of nations; why these growths and decays of empires should be so bloody. The forest, the field, do not thus flourish and fade. Why does the war-horse trample so many innocent beings beneath his bloody hoof? Why is the more hellish passion of his rider allowed such indulgence? Why do the terrible scenes in Bulgarian villages accompany the fall of one empire and the rise of its rival—babes roasted alive, men impaled on stakes about their compounds, women—no word can describe their condition, subject at once to the vilest pas-

sion and the fiercest rage of the soldiery? Why must every upward step of humanity be upon the fairest flowers of innocence and loveliness? Why must we cry out in utter horror inexplicable,

“Thou madest life in man and brute,  
Thou madest death, and lo! thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made?”

None the less perplexed are we at the delay of the coming of Christ, the first as well as the second. Why the true light was withheld for so many ages; why the government of the world was committed to nations steeped in idolatry, ignorance, barbarity; why for so many centuries generation after generation passed through lives of grossest darkness, mental and moral, down to hopeless graves, with scarce a glimmer of celestial light to dispel or even to relieve the shadows on their pathway; nay, why death itself hath passed upon all men—babes, and youth, and maids, and mothers, and large-hearted sires—all this, to one who hath not Scripture for his guide, is a shadow of shadows, clouds and darkness that can be felt.

As the eye wanders over the earth we see it

still in its human relations much as it was materially ere the Spirit brooded over it, without form and void. Starvation and violence, ignorance and impiety thickly cover the race; why should such a fair planet be the home of such excessive misery? Why should the soul of man, so capable of producing the abundant and glorious fruits of righteousness and holiness, bear only thorns and briers fit but for cursing, and ending only in corruption and death? Why should cities the very flower of humanity, the civilizing centers of its congregations, be now, as when Cicero described the greatest of them all in wealth, luxury, genius, and glory, "the common sewer of the nations?"

We can only answer, It is past finding out. With our feeble reason we may attempt to assign motives for such universal facts, but our attempts return upon our own heads. We gaze upon these elevations and depressions in society, this prevailing misery and this rare happiness, this sweeping rain of calamity, now in fever, now in business, laying waste a city with sickness and an industrious clime with enforced idleness, bringing bankruptcy

to thousands of employers and starvation to tens of thousands of their workmen, sending the mourners in multitudes about our streets. As we gaze hopelessly, what can we say? We put our hands upon our mouths and our mouths in the dust. We are like poor Othello, "perplexed in the extreme." "He doeth his pleasure, and giveth no account of any of his matters."

But closer yet comes this mystery of providence. It sits shrouded at every hearthstone. It turns that hearthstone to a gravestone. "Death enters, and there is no defense." He takes the stalwart head from a sick companion and large and young family. Suddenly, with a stroke, the tree falls, and the vine clinging to it and its tender clusters lie scattered over the earth. He snatches the mother from her babes, and they cry in vain for her clasp and kiss. He tears the wife from the arms of her husband, and the lone man sends those arms roaming around her pillow, crying out in hopeless weakness,

"O that 't were possible,  
After long years of pain,  
To feel the arms of my true love  
Round me once again!"



But it is not possible! The heavens are blank and black, earless and tearless. He snatches the babe from the cradle and leaves its father and mother stupefied by the blow, but gives no ointment to heal or even mollify the dreadful wound. He bears away the maiden in the dew of her youth, perfect in love and loveliness, despite tears and prayers of parent or lover, and lays her in the charnel house, a Juliet of grace to be a banquet for worms. He strikes down the youth in the very hour of his assured triumph, with every charm to allure, every talent to sway, every quality of heart and intellect to command, with desire and ability to further the cause of God and man. This moment he was towering in manly splendor—and lo! he is not; we look diligently, but cannot find him. So falls Marcellus in every age and people. We see the virtuous and diligent leveled at a stroke, while the vile and cruel flourish till the hair blanches and age exhausts the power, but not the desire, for wickedness.

Such facts, seen in every period of human history, a surprise to every thoughtful mind, only thicken the gloom that enshrouds the movements of God. We expend our energies

in vain endeavors to solve this problem. We struggle to catch the least glimpse of the motives that have made him thus display his power. We charge the calamity to accident, or disease, or lack of sanitary conditions, to wind or wave ; but we feel that behind all these pivotal circumstances is God, who doeth his will. We exclaim in a cry of compulsory, not intelligent and calm, submission:

“ In two days it steads thee not to fly from thy grave  
The appointed and the unappointed day.  
In the first neither balm nor physician can save,  
Nor thee, on the second, the universe slay.”

And then we fly from this cry of fate and say it is not the universe or lesser creatures that kill or make alive, but God the Lord, to whom the universe is no more than its primal atom. “ He can create, and he destroy,” he only. But why he destroys what he has pronounced and we discern to be very good is utterly beyond the wisest ken. “ He made darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.”

Such are some of the clouds that engirt the divine nature of government. They inclose him on every side. Whether we seek to be-

hold him in the works of nature or of grace ; in his natural attributes or revealed Trinity in Unity ; in his creative, sustaining, or destroying power ; in his spiritual or material kingdom and government ; in his general or special providences—under every conceivable mode of research or inquiry, to every observer, he presents to us the same unfathomable, impenetrable mystery.

But the word of God presents an opposite view. Over against this thick darkness, this darkness which can be felt, which is felt, deeply, ineradicably, unspeakably felt, there ariseth a light, a light that not only dissipates but engulfs the gloom. The very psalm that contains this dreary truth cheerily declares that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness, the result of light, for the upright in heart. John, the revealer in so many ways of divine truth, not alone in apocalyptic splendors and terms, but in the life, nature, and fellowship of Christ, cries out by the Holy Ghost, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

Can this be true? Can the same God be in darkness and be light? Can clouds and dark-

ness be round about him and yet his nature be perfect and perpetual light? It is true, though only the Bible, of all books, and Christianity, of all faiths, has ever detected the truth. To all other creeds he is darkness—Greek, Egyptian, Buddhistic, Brahman, Mohammedan. He is darkness. Jove smiles not when he strikes except as hatred smiles when indulged. Zeus wounds not to heal. Mohammedanism cries, “God is great,” and inscribes this innumerable times over every hall and mosque in marble letters, but never writes, “God is good.” Quintilian exclaims over the dead body of his son, “Curse the gods!” and exclaims wisely after the best human knowledge. In nature, in providence, he is to be feared, not loved. Adam followed the universal sinful instinct when he heard the voice of God and hid himself, for he was affrighted. Well he might be! That fear has taken hold of all his children. It is the first disease they received from their first father. God is an object of dread and dislike—of dislike because of dread. How can he then be light and love and joy and peace? How can the child of Adam cry out, “My heart longeth for the courts of the Lord;” “Whom

have I in heaven but Thee?" How can he say, "I am sick of love for my God?"

"O would He more of heaven bestow,  
And let the vessels break,  
And let my ransomed spirit go  
To grasp the God I seek."

How? By and through the word and grace of God. In the Scriptures it is written, in the ransomed heart it is felt, by the renewed eye it is seen—in and by these only. The same Being guided the Israelites by a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire. He gathers clouds around him, and yet reveals himself through them. He is light to the eye of faith, though that of speculation and mere curiosity is blinded by the depths of darkness enshrouding him. He drives away the clouds that impede our spiritual vision while still veiled in providence in an awful mystery. This is not an assumed but a necessary concealment. It arises from his infinitude and our sinfulness. If we were sinless, still he would be mysterious. Even the angels vainly desire to look into the dark mystery of redemption. Infinity is dark to finitude. What delegated power, if it were ever so mighty, could vie with that which was

almighty? What degree of created wisdom could explore the depths of the uncreated? What acquisitions of study could collect a store equal or comparable to the accumulations of infinite knowledge? From necessity, therefore, does he hide himself from his creatures, whether in heaven or on the earth. If he could entirely reveal himself, then were they not creatures, or he not God.

But though thus clothed to all eternity in infinite darkness; though concealed, as must be, all his purposes for the future and all the reasons for his present acts, unless he especially choose to declare them, still he may be all light. The soul upon which his grace has acted, which has been upraised from nature's darkness into his marvelous light, sees his steps, his face, even in the paths of pain in which he may be compelled to walk. Though incapable of fathoming the mysteries which always surround him, still he is capable of perceiving in the workings of creation and even of providence, as illumined by grace, the power, the skill, and the benevolence of God. He can see in his works the proofs of his divinity; in his being the harmonious necessities

of infinite creatorship, the eternally invisible Father, the manifesting Son, his express image and glory, the Holy Ghost, illuminator, reprover, sanctifier, comforter. He can see in the spiritual world the same divine goodness and wisdom, the same exquisite adaptation of the external to the internal, of matter to mind, of mind to matter. And so wherever he fixes his gaze he finds God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Even the bereavements which come like the blight of eternal death over the circle of friends and kindred, which fall like a pall on society, though veiled in thickest dark, to the humble and believing bring into clearer light our dependence on God and the sufficiency there is in him to accomplish all his matters, through any instrument he may raise, and even if every instrument so raised up is seemingly violently wrested from his hand. It is not so wrested. He created it, he removes it; he abides. That babe, expected to be the support of its parents, crumbles back to the nothingness out of which it so lately came; but God crumbles not. That youth and maid, fair to see, disappear as soon as seen, and leave the

bewildered circle desolate and doubtful. But He who is eternally strong and fair, the chiefest in lordly vigor among ten thousand, and the one and the only one altogether lovely, he fails not and fades not. He is the glory and the beauty, pure and perfect, forever and forever. That mother torn from her babes, that father from the mother and the little ones, who can solve the riddle? No Samson strong enough to wrestle with that problem; no Solomon wise enough to guess that secret. But do we not see light in His light who is Light? Does he not thereby teach the family smitten of God and afflicted that he is tenderer than mother, stronger than father, potent in love, and will not suffer even these afflictions to be above what they are able to bear; nay, will bear them all himself, and come the nearer to them the farther he removes lover and friend from them? Only such darkness can bring forth such light. Only then can the Comforter come when the Christ is gone. Only can the Pentecostal glory break upon the crucifixion gloom. Only can the shinings of salvation appear after the rains of penitential sorrow.



But though to the Christian there may be a great light shed upon the character and concerns of God; though his believing soul may trust where it cannot examine and rest where it cannot see, and see, even, where all other eyes fail, still throughout eternity there will be a gradual unfolding of the truths which must now be received by faith. There will be a constant source of activity and delight in removing barrier after barrier in its onward course, in dispersing shadow upon shadow that had hung around the divine nature and working. Lessing's preference will then be more than fulfilled: "If I had truth offered me in one hand and search for it in the other, I would accept the latter." We shall have both the truth and the search for it. Not like the blinded seekers who refuse to accept the first principles of real science, the fear of God and faith in Christ, and who are, therefore, as was poor Lessing himself too often, ever seeking and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, but, like the angels, searching, and growing in the search into the knowledge of the deep things of God, increasing in light and still allured by increasing mystery, God ever

more near and ever the more hiding himself, all light and still all darkness.

But then as now, here as there, we may see light in his light. If he by necessity of being hides himself from us as Creator, he reveals himself as Saviour. He floods the soul with such heavenly light that all natural darkness flees away. All errors in doctrine and practice appear in their true deformity and then disappear from the soul they have possessed, like the demons that revealed their demonism and then fled to their own, the outer darkness. In the center of that redeeming, new creating glory he will abide forever.

Has this light ever arisen upon you? Has God been seen by you in the supreme glory and beauty of the cross? Has the darkness which shrouded the earth and thickened around him as he hung upon that tree of agony and disgrace ever been scattered in your souls by the light which burst from his sepulcher and which sat in fiery tongues on the heads of his disciples? Or do you yet abide in the spiritual darkness, enjoying no light from his presence, seeing not how nature and providence in this light appear to flow in their proper relations,

or assured that what you fail to know now ye shall know hereafter?

If this gloom still surrounds your soul, if in addition to that which must constantly conceal our Maker is added that which arises from an unrepentant and unfilial heart, a depravity of inheritance and cultivation, of strength and desire, remember that this unnatural though unfortunately most natural darkness must be perpetual unless speedily removed by faith in the blood of Christ. Never through all the boundless waste of ages will arrive the moment when the cloud will depart, but, growing deeper and deeper, it will enshroud the soul in its terrible, its everlasting blackness and darkness. What God is not, that soul will be; what God is, that soul will never be. Clouds and darkness are round about him, but he is light. The willful, choiceful sinner will be clouds and darkness, never, never, never the light. He shall go away into the outer darkness—go never to return; go darker than its uttermost dark; go never to see or feel again an illuminating ray. The blindest eye detects the difference between day and night, but there is no difference there, for there is no day there, only night and night

forever—night in the soul, night without, night in the passions that rush constantly hellward, in the reason that studies how to prove the worse the better, in every faculty still left, still conscious, still active. The flashes of the fires which tried that darkness only make it the more dark. Byron's dream is only a faint conception of that state where sun and moon are orbs of blackness and every flame intensifies the gloom.

Hasten to escape the possibility of such a state, hasten to secure the glories of the opposite condition! There shall be no night there. They need no candle, nor the light of the sun, for the Lamb is the light thereof. Every ray flows from the Sun of Righteousness, the sun obscured in sacrifice, shining in arising and ascending glory. Let desire for that estate fill your soul with shrinkings from the horrors of that darkness, with longings for the glories of that light. From the bright cloud that overshadowed the Saviour fell a voice proclaiming him to be God's beloved Son. From the bright cloud of the same divine presence and glory let the same voice assure you of the same truth—a son, an heir, a joint-heir with

Jesus Christ, to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Then will the clouds which now are around about him brighten with the inner glory with which he will irradiate them. As the upheaved masses which conceal the everliving sun are set on fire by the very beams they would conceal, and tint the heavens with every hue in the magnificent radiance coming from the light within, so shall every thundercloud of wrath, every heavy cloud of sorrow, the wide void and waste of the still unknown, be filled with the shinings of God within. Unlike the natural sun whose atmosphere of light covers an earth of opacity as lusterless as our own, the innermost is light, the outer only obscure. But the soul at one with Christ is in the center of the innermost, and the atmospheres of providence, grace, and nature, yea, even of being itself, shall shine in the glory of God, author at once of nature, providence, and grace; yea, of his own being also.

This light has been discerned by poet and philosopher when illumined by Christian faith. Dante's visions of the Celestial Hill were the very essence, the fifth or quintessence, essence

of essence of essence of essence of essence of Light, a realm of soul purity and power as only an eye and tongue of highest Christian training could have seen and sang. Paul saw it by faith and by sight when caught up in that seventh heaven, an essence of twice the power of his follower Dante, not seen but experienced, a glory that was unspeakable, that no mortal man might approach unless first dipped in immortality, a glory that he perpetually longed to again and forever enjoy. John gazed upon it, dwelt in it, was filled with it, and fills with it every verse of his Scriptures, whether of biography, letter, or vision. Every Christian shall enter it. Multitudes upon multitudes have entered it—the realm of light and love, of light because of love and love in light—and into it shall all the multitudes of the believers and faithful enter, there to abide and to grow, seeing ever, even there, clouds and darkness round about the divine center, seeing still more clearly in his ceaseless outgoings that “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

May we be comforted and strengthened in every hour of gloom by this clear shining of the Face Divine!



“ For the fashion of this world passeth away.”—I Cor.  
vii, 31.

“ This life, which seems so fair,  
Is like a bubble blown up in the air  
By sporting children’s breath,  
Who chase it everywhere,  
And strive who can most motion it bequeath.  
And though it sometimes seem of its own weight  
Like to an eye of gold to be fixed there,  
And calm to hover in that empty height,  
That only is because it is so light ;  
But in that pomp it doth not long appear,  
But when ’tis most admired, in a thought,  
Because it erst was naught, it turns to naught.”



### III.

#### THE WORLD VANISHING.

WE are naturally led to believe that the objects which meet our gaze, the customs and laws of society under which we have been educated, are necessarily permanent. We see no change or decay in star or earth, in man or nature. They present to the eye of age the same features that they did to him in youth. They may be slightly modified in minor points, but they are substantially unaltered. The same scenes in nature appear, slightly varied, perhaps, by movements of population. The same code of laws rule, changed a little in minor restrictions or liberality. The same habits control the daily life of the people, scarcely affected by increasing knowledge and wealth.

A sudden outbreak, a civil volcano, sometimes bursts through the level surface of society, overturning all its institutions and introducing a new chaos, out of which may arise a new and more perfect cosmos. Such eruptions

may disturb the quiet belief in the unchangeableness of this world. We may exclaim against the declaration of the text, "See the English, the American, the French Revolution; see Napoleon and our civil war. Do not these disturb, if not destroy, the declaration that all things continue as they were from the beginning?"

Look a little closer, and they will be seen to have scarcely affected the steady currents of the world. The surface is tossed, the depths remain unmoved. The volcano does not disturb the center of the earth with its fires or fury. Only the crust is broken. So these social storms and earthquakes, that sweep over, heave, and even break up the surface of society, leave untouched the principles and practices on which it is founded. The Parisians have a saying that no revolution disturbs the omnibus drivers. So no revolution disturbs the immense current of feeling and action on which flows the stream of humanity. That stream is steadier than the Homeric ocean that rolled around the earth, steadier than the courses of the stars, steadier than life itself. From observing it alone we cannot say the *fashion* of this world passeth away.

Our experience gives us no proof of this change ; and, though history might teach the truth, yet we fail to be conscious of it because it is not a matter of personal experience. "All men think all men mortal but themselves," and that because it is impossible to conceive of death as a personal and conscious experience. Not only of the child, but of the decrepit centenarian, who has seen thousands die, must we say, "What can he know of death?" He feels his life in every limb, feebly, perhaps, paralytically almost, but it is life ; and death and life have nothing in common. They are incapable of being compared, contrasted, or submitted in any shape or degree to a common examination. Even when forced by observation of history to concede that other nations and ages have been compelled to submit to death, we quickly frame some excuse for our own state and time which shall except them from the general doom. We find in us some germ of immortality that shall perpetuate our nationality. Without doubt we confess the inhabitants of Nineveh, Troy, Tyre, Thebes, or other mighty cities that arose, flourished, and fell, indulged in the same views

while contemplating the glory and seeming durability of their monuments. They might each have said, as did Macaulay of St. Paul's, that the far-off barbarian, blooming in his civilization, shall sketch their ruins; but they would no more have believed that this would happen than he believed it of his favorite London. The courtiers that fluttered around the throne of Babylon could not have been made to believe the declaration of Isaiah, even if they had heard it from his own lips and believed it to have been the word of God, that the time should come when not only the pompous palaces that graced the city, not only the stately gardens, the greatest height yet to which art and wealth have ever vied with nature, not only the language which they used to express their flatteries and adoration of the throne, not only the laws that governed court and state, should disappear, but even the most common dwellings, the rudest, and, therefore, strongest habits, should be swept away by the same desolating wave, and scarce a vestige be left by which even the site of their strength and splendor could be discerned.

The Greek who hung enraptured on the lips

of Pericles, or leaped in enthusiasm at the summons of Demosthenes, or walked in proud procession from Athens to the gorgeous temple of Delphos, or mingled as spectator or actor in the Olympian games, or gazed uplifted on the splendors of the Parthenon, fresh and sparkling in its marble, ivory, and gold—how he would have resented as a gross insult to his race the assertion that the time would come when no multitude nor orator would inflame the bema, no procession would move from city to shrine, no shrine or city would exist. Nay, when the city of Delphos should itself be a matter of dispute, and its deity should have been for ages uncrowned and contemned; when even the city itself, its cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces and solemn temples, should have disappeared as a dream when one awaketh, and only a few stained pillars and rock-hewn steps should survive to mark its tomb. The Roman who trod in just pride the forum and the Via Sacra, who sat in the Coliseum and gazed on the splendors of Cæsar's palaces, who wandered amid groves and well-nigh forests of statuary in the Circus Maximus, and everywhere did not so much dream as realize uni-

versal dominion—had he been told in the culmination of that sovereignty that that dominion to which he declared the gods had set no bounds, either of time or space, should utterly and forever disappear; that even his own city should be whelmed helplessly beneath successive waves of barbarism; that the forest of statues should be leveled and only here and there a trunk, a torso, escape to tell the marvel of its glory; that the wondrous palace of all the Cæsars should be a rubbish heap, deep into which the explorer must delve if he would find any trace of its existence; that the very Coliseum should be rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and stand a broken ruin, with weeds for seats, and jackals for emperors and senate and assembly—how would his soul have sprung to arms at such an imputation! How confidently would he have appealed to its long and lengthening history, to its mighty arms, its controlling laws, its wide-spreading language, its men whose very names sounded solid and enduring, and affirmed that such prophecy was fable! For a thousand years it had ruled the world; whence was to come its downfall? In such reflections the self-satisfied citizen

of these mighty nations would naturally, could reasonably, indulge. Yet they have passed away. So may our expectations be a delusion, our land again be a desolation. The fashion of this world passeth away.

The fashion of this world passeth away in respect to its opinions and usages. The views which are current at present are vastly different from those which have prevailed in other ages. We may see but slight differences if we compare it with the preceding age, though even here marked differences can be discerned. But if we look over longer spaces of time, the distinctions are more clearly defined.

Note the changes in European thought and life since these words were first written. The doctrine of universal individual freedom, body, soul, or spirit, was utterly unknown—we might say utterly inconceivable—in that age, and for centuries, almost millenniums, later. It may have existed in the savage state, though then only to those who had might out of which to make their own right; universal equal right was a thing unknown. The individual was merged in the state, and the state in the sovereign, and the sovereign was God. The

lower orders, the masses and multitudes, were only the broad base for this human pyramid. The apex was man and also God.

Where was there room for personal conscious liberty in such a system? It could not have been allowed for an instant any more than the solid pyramid of Ghizeh, the greatest marvel on the earth, could allow the tiniest stone in its mighty mass to be endowed with inalienable rights as to its own volitions. The indestructible pile would instantly crumble and disappear. So man was lost in state, and serf or citizen was a volitionless unit of a compact if not crystallized mass.

Then closed around this pyramidal humanity the thick darkness of barbarism. The former fashion of personal liberty to at least a favored few, and experienced by the New Testament believer, gave way to universal belief that the only way to be man, to please God, or win immortality, was to yield minds and souls into the power of priests, wills and bodies into that of kings. How deep, how dreadful, that darkness! It makes one shudder as he looks back upon it to this day.

But this fashion has passed away. The



faculties which are the property of each soul, which cannot be severed from it by any consent even of itself, or by any tyranny of others, which may sleep but cannot be paralyzed, which leap up in every child and must be suppressed in every generation, asserted themselves at last, violently, fiercely, murderously. They were suppressed with greater violence and murder; but oppression cannot always reign. These faculties asserted their right to be and to become. In the Reformation, both before and after Luther, this assertion took form and power. These faculties were at first puny with lack of exercise, but strong with inward vitality. The heart but dimly perceived the rights God had given it, and more dimly the way in which it should walk to make those rights victorious.

The doctrine of individual freedom, in its resurrection, saw around it hostile opinions throned in wealth, power, dignity, antiquity, culture, and religion. How could it dare to thrust its own impulses against such leagued and lofty foes? How could it fail of falling into doubt sometimes concerning the rightfulness of its own suggestions? How could it

fail of trembling in engaging, unaided by any visible powers, in so fearful a contest?

It took ages for this sentiment to gain any foothold in society, and still longer periods for it to become sovereign. Yet the fashion has prevailed. The former sentiment has passed away, and with it legions of the false views concerning government and religion which supported it and were supported by it. The truth so long crushed to earth gradually arose in every heart, until the superincumbent load of tyranny in Church and State was tossed from it, and it stood forth in its own fair and winning proportions.

Yet even this fashion must, in a degree, pass away. The tendency to rush from one extreme to the other, from slavish reverence to lawless infidelity, renders a counterchange partly necessary. The fashion now prevailing of disuniting all thoughts of God from life and law, of casting religion entirely out of the pale of civil action, of expelling Christ not only formally, but actually, from the Constitution, or rejecting the word of God as either inspired or authoritative, or even to be casually read in a state school—all this supersecularization,

this elevation of man above his Creator, and abolishing of God from humanity, must itself pass away. It is a dream as vicious as its counterpart. In the one a single Cæsar is God, in the other all men as one are God. No Cæsar, whether one or many, can be God. We must bow to God, not man; to Christ, not Cæsar. We must acknowledge that to him, and in him, and for him, and by him are all of us and ours, now and eternally. Then and thus will we conform to the fashion that abideth forever.

The experience of every one proves this mutability. The feelings that affected us in childhood, the objects that fascinated, the hopes we cherished, the pursuits we followed, have all disappeared or become so changed as to lose all their power. The fashion of childhood passeth away. No longer does mere bodily exercise delight us, nor now do we exult in winning some childish game. We do not cry for vexation when deprived of some desired object. We have put away childish things.

The more lofty ambition that seizes on the youthful heart, the love of excitement and

novelty which hurries him to the scenes of danger and pursuits that feed these passions, that make him a soldier, a sailor, a traveler; the enthusiasm with which he plunges into business or politics—all these traits, manly and noble though they be, must pass away. They are of a fleeting fashion. The intoxication with which the world of pleasure bewilders him will desert him. He passes into manhood with his fiery nature settling down into granitic habits, good or evil, his lava flow cooling into shape and strength. Here a new fashion controls him. He casts aside the vanity which delighted in tricky display, the hungering and thirsting after novel scenes and circumstances, the passions that crave strong and poisoned fiction to feed their flame, and, unless resisted, the stronger and more poisonous fact to increase the burnings and consume both body and soul. These all disappear, and soberer views and hopes address us—soberer but not weaker. Now comes the fashion of regularity; now duty is easy and even agreeable; now the familiar is the more fascinating; now wife and child, husband and home, grow intensely deep and tender. We prefer the

quiet joys of domestic life to the rude pleasures of the outer world. Books are our companions, systematic thought delightful. Each day, as its forerunner, a slight advance in the same path is all that is sought. Life is less brilliant, but more true. We have plucked the heart of the mystery, we think, that so dazzled and drew us in our childhood and youth. Have we? Shall not this fashion pass away? If of this world it will—it must.

Nay, alas! even as we look and love and tread, as we hope, an eternal round of pleasurable peace, a change passeth over it and it is gone. Those parents so clung to now, because so much more appreciated; those children lying in the lap of motherhood, graceful or strong with youthful charms; that companion lovely beyond compare, glorious in his strength—alas! alas! “they pass downward to the place of common sleep.” This fashion of home and heart life vanisheth away.

Even this center of our life, this summit, as we fancy, of our being, changes. Ripening age has a fashion of its own. The sturdy race for wealth or honors yields to placid acceptance of fate. The grasshopper becomes a

burden; desire fails; an intense love of rest takes the place of an intense love of excitement; a constant contemplation of the great change steadily approaching replaces a complete indifference to it; even a loathing of novelty governs where a loathing of rest long ruled. The nature is reversed. A complete transformation is effected. We hate naturally the things we once loved, and love what we once hated. We turn our vision backward, which once only looked forward. We dwell in memory, not hope. The natural man, the fashion of this world, sees no hope beyond this life. He is shut up to the body and to time, and as the body now ceases to impel him to new ventures he subsides into indifference, a calm not of activity, as in manhood's prime, but of repose, until at last his earthly house crumbles and he sinks into the grave.

How strikingly does it appear in respect to ourselves no less than mankind that the fashion of this world passeth away!

Why do these changes attend all earthly things? Why is it that the life of nature and the life of man are possessed with the same mortal tendency? Why must the flush of

health fade from the cheek, the flash of thought and feeling from the eye, the form graceful or noble bend and totter? Why must the deep affections of the heart be stopped in their impetuous flow by the barriers of death? Why must the bodies which we so passionately love become so abhorrent that we hasten to bury them out of our sight? Why must the institutions our fathers revered, and under which they passed prosperous days, crumble to naught and become a scoff to the irreverent, a worshiped relic to the antiquary? Why must the fashion of this world pass away? These questions are constantly proposed to the thoughtful mind. They merit solemn consideration.

One reason why such doom overhangs all earthly things is their imperfection. In our bodies are sowed the seeds of death. With the first breath we inhale corruption, we exhale death. The first rush of blood through infantile arteries, the first throbbings of the great fountains of life, are not perfect. The doctor will describe scientifically these original defects. Nay, disease has gotten into the whole system from both its parents, from all its parents, for

a hundred generations, from its first parents. The creature which God pronounced very good, as perfect as his wisdom could make him, by his own act marred the structure he dwelt in, thrust obstacles among the exquisite mechanism which is constantly diminishing the vigor, wearing away the wheels, and will bring the marvelous machine to a standstill—to destruction.

Sometimes the machine works on for years without getting out of repair, and at last stops only by a gradual wearing away of its parts. Sometimes it is broken almost as soon as it begins to act, some part refusing to act and causing thus a stoppage of the whole. In others, and in most, it operates more or less easily for a few years, often getting out of repair, almost ceasing to move, again moving slowly and with great difficulty, a tearing cough shaking it, a piercing pneumonia rending it, an agonizing headache maddening it, a paralysis, an apoplexy, a fever, a thousand and ten thousand disasters happening to it, till the very inhabitant thereof, who sympathizes and suffers with its every weakness, sighs for relief from the painful and prolonged troubles. If



we had never known sin, that original perfection would only have grown more perfect, its loveliness not diminishing, its strength ever increasing. Sin brought corruption, weakened infancy, maddened youth, withered age. Sin causes growth in weakness, decay unto weakness. It is sin and sin only that bringeth forth death.

But if by the fall this fatal tendency was implanted in our bodies, much more deeply and fatally was it brought into our souls. Not only the exquisite structure of the body was bruised and murdered by the fall, the far more exquisite machine of the soul was ruined. We are apt to dwell more frequently on the changeableness of the outer world of earth and man ; but if our heart had not been blinded in its perception of spiritual things, we should have a clearer and sadder proof of our mutability by witnessing the corruption that has seized upon the soul. As our puny bodies drew in death with their first vital mother, so our souls in their first impulse felt the same doom. Depraved desires sprang into being long before consciousness gave warning of their presence, and so completely did they blend themselves

with the soul's actions that they seemed to itself natural and even necessary.

We are all aware that the first risings of anger or pride or selfishness of which we are conscious do not strike us as novel, or make us flee from their horrible presence; we seem familiar with them. They are a part of ourselves. We cherish and fondle and nourish them, and seek above all things their gratification. Not till the teachings of parents or of the Spirit of God arouse us will we resist them, and even in resistance we confess their power. However much goodness shines forth in the unconscious life of childhood, through the indwellings of the divine Spirit, the baser nature is also there, and "the trail of the serpent is over it all."

If we could see the beauty of a perfect soul we should be amazed at the deformity of our own condition. If we could have this spiritual mechanism in all its marvelous symmetry and harmony unveiled, see every faculty delightedly operating in its own sphere, and contributing its portion of vigor and pleasure to every other part, if self-reliance joined with humility, benevolence with justice, hospitality with re-

tirement, temperance with generosity, veneration with independence, divine awe with divine love, mental activity with devotion, every faculty full and perfect, yet no clashing, no decay, would we not thrill with rapture at the sight? Would the mere personal charms, the harmonious proportions of the body, be noticeable, except as lovely media for the lovely soul? Compare this beautiful vision which God designed and created and placed on this earth for a season with that which does not meet the eye—self-reliance changed to self-conceit; humility to haughtiness or to servility that creeps at the feet of insolent pride; temperance changed to a bloated appetite which guzzles without taste; constraint to lawlessness that laughs at every order of law; vanity that absorbs the whole attention of the soul and transforms it into a frivolous thing blown about by every breeze of fashion; the deep reverence for God becoming a ribald infidelity or an ice-bound fatality; the powers of the mind cultivated independent of the heart, making a giant in thought and an idiot in faith, tempting the self-inflated student with the very delusion that took captive our first parents, so

that he thinks he is what they hoped to be, gods ; or, on the other hand, cultivates the religious faculties to the neglect of the rational, making a creature possessing zeal without knowledge, who scoffs at conscience and claims for its impious ravings the force of revelation. Such, also, is the present state of the human soul ; and because it is such, every expression of itself in the laws or customs of mankind is imperfect and their fashion must pass away.

Just in proportion to the amount of truth in every outcome of the soul is its durability. If it is thoroughly false and superficial, it is still-born ; if largely so, it dies in infancy. Perhaps no more striking illustration of this law can be given than in the changing fashion of dress. That mere covering which is not itself either body or soul, by its control over both body and soul has come to be called by this very name. The most fluctuating of all the properties of man, its name (as its nature) is fashion. It has no sound basis ; it withers ere it blossoms ; the angelic apparel must partake of the angelic nature and abide like the transfigured robe in complete symmetry with

the transfigured body and soul. But the victims of this human passion are ever on the whirl. They die daily with the gratified fancy. So senselessly can the immortal soul degrade itself, into such narrow compass can it be contracted, the divine man a model for a tailor, the perfect woman only a perfect fashion plate.

But there are other modes of prostituting our natures hardly less superficial and far more debasing. The appetite, which makes a boor a glutton, a man of breeding an epicure, is perpetually changing and never satisfying. The Roman epicures who took medicine to throw up the costly dinners they had just eaten, that they might be permitted to taste new viands, were as gross in their habits as they were refined in their dishes. The passion for pleasure at any cost and but for a moment is a changing emotion, which grows by what it feeds upon and craves new food with every gratification.

These changeful fashions spring from shallow sources, call into exercise no high faculties, no deep principles, and therefore, like the seed cast on stony places, wither quickly away.

Every object below God will be found too low in its nature to satisfy forever the human soul. Nay, if that object be sinful, you will loathe it as strongly as you have once craved it, loathe not to rid yourself of its presence, but clinging the closer to it the more you detest it. Thus clings the drunkard to the cups he hates, thus the drug-eater to the opium he has made his master, thus the lustful to the desires that have consumed him. The fashion fleeth but the passion abideth, ever seeking change, never finding rest, ever driven on the same stream of fire, into the lake of fire, hating the sin that so easily besets, yet captured by it at its will.

But the final reason why the fashion of this world passeth away is that God may in this way the more clearly exhibit the durable nature of eternal things.

If we turn our thoughts from the fading objects of sense and feeling that encompass our earthly estate to the world beyond and above the grave, the contrast between these two realms is overwhelming. Here everything is in constant alternation. "The mountain crumbling cometh to naught, and the rock is re-

moved out of its place ;” the sturdy forests fall before fire, ax, or age, and lay their lifeless forms among the leaves, their offspring, which they have for so many years buried at their feet ; the sea licks up the shore and the shore invades the sea. The ocean, most restless of visible things, typifies the conditions under which earth and earthly things exist.

The great worlds that float in space slowly but surely approach their last day. The more science knows the more death it knows. Forces dissolve, resolve, and then die the same. “Eternal alternation” is the law of the physical universe, but the world beyond is permanent. Death hath no more dominion. His control stops with the shores of time. In the eternal things there dwells no taint of impurity, there lurks no imperfection. They have the truth of God as a basis and are as immutable as they are perfect. The delights that engage their affections, the occupations that engross their attention, satisfy without satiating, foster while they feed. There we labor not for, nor feast upon, the meat that perisheth, but that which endureth unto everlasting life.

Thus are presented the strongest induce-

ments to secure enduring pleasures. If your heart's deepest tides set toward some soul here, would it not be desirable that such embodied love might be permanent? If the person who has thus awakened and enlarged your whole being could abide unchanged in the beloved features, fading not through sickness or age, would not earthly love, now so deep, so tender, so rapturous, put on a state of infinite exaltation? Such a love and Lover finds the heart in Christ—such a home in his heaven. No affliction shadows the brightness of that home. No toil or sickness or years mar the beauty, dim the eye, wither the strength of that Beloved. And all the surroundings of the Prince and his paradise are alike perfect and perpetual. He abides forever; so do his. The society, the scenery, the customs, the communions, the government, the laws—they change not; they need no change; they are not capable of improvement. Why throw them aside? Who wishes to cast aside his wedding bliss? Who desires it not to abide forever? Who wishes gray hairs, wrinkled cheeks, panting chests, trembling limbs, palpitating hearts, the monitions of decay? Who does not wish with



Ariel to cry, "I can fly or I can run" without exhaustion or decay? That wish fulfilled is heaven. The society is perpetual, the studies, the scenes. Not varying to decay, but only to improve, for Christ is unchanging, and his residence and companions are like unto him. His principles, which are his nature, abide. They are perfect, they endure forever; they project themselves upon the surrounding realm, and it, too, becomes like its Lord, eternal.

Even here we can possess a fashion that endureth. Our spiritual nature may take on the nature of God. Charity or love divine never faileth. If the heart is filled with this love, if it thrills with joy at the future glory and abides in peace amid present temptations, you may rest assured that you have received the grace that endureth forever. The Lord Christ hath told us that if we eat his flesh and drink his blood we shall never die. If our hearts are possessed by his Spirit the corrupting and corruptible passions which they had followed will vanish away and the grace will enter which endureth forever. Amid the universal decay and dissolution going on about us and within

us there stands forth this undying principle, this life of God in the soul of man. As the Hebrew youth in the fiery furnace, unscathed amid the fierce destruction going on around them, so stands this experience divine, the temple of truth and holiness, coming down from God out of heaven amid the wreck of matter and spirit, ceaselessly prevailing. To that temple you can alone fly for shelter. In it you can alone abide in unchanging peace. From it you can gaze with calmness upon the desolation reigning around you. You can see empires totter and fall, dynasties disappear, laws die, institutions, political or social or religious, grow decrepit and enter their grave, or shattered in an instant by infuriated mobs, friend and lover put far from you and your acquaintance disappear in the darkness; nay, you yourself draw near and nearer the dominions of death. Yet no abiding sorrow need weigh you down, for you can feel assured that though the heavens pass away, silently or with a great noise, though the earth be removed out of its place, though death sweep the universal circle of your souls with its dread besom, still "from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God," and

from death to life comes forth buried loves and lovers. We can turn from the changing fashions of earth to the everlasting fashions of heaven. We can see reproduced there in fairer colors every worthy object which we loved here. We can see those qualities which were the strongest attractions in our friends outliving the power which had slain the body and clothed in undecaying forms of unspeakable loveliness and life.

We are all rapidly approaching that world. The seeds of death planted in each of us before our birth grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength. They may find so rich a soil that they in a few years overtop the tree of life and bring us to the garner of the grave. If the vital forces resist these anti-vital forces strenuously, the conflict may be a losing one for a score or two of years, and then comes the turn of battle; the forces of death steadily win their way, they lay low leader and regiment of natural vitality; after leader and regiment the eye fails, the limbs cease to fly at the order of the will, the heart throbs convulsively and weakly, the appetite narrows itself to regular and infrequent channels, the

nerves tremble at one's trifling pressure. The death army abandons no field it has once won. It may allow partial repossession, but under its sovereignty, until, wearied with its delay, it takes complete possession—your countenance is changed and you pass away.

It is related of Xerxes that, while preparing to cross from Asia to Greece, he ordered a review to be made on the shores of Abydos. A magnificent throne was erected upon a lofty peak. Seated on this pinnacle of gold he gazed upon the unnumbered millions below him on ship and shore. No sight could have been more dazzling or more august. The hill-sides were white with tents; the sea with ships. Gay banners floating in the sun, glittering with gold and silver, weakened the eye by their brightness and beauty. Multitudes upon multitudes of men filled up the vast shores, while on the dark sea lay the pompous galleys, decked with every ornament unbounded wealth and intense love of display could suggest or procure. In the midst of such pride and circumstance of glorious war, when nature seemed to have been completely ravaged to contribute to his glory, when multitudinous nobles

rejoiced to kiss the hem of his garment and worshiped him as god, Xerxes wept. Amazed at such an act, expressive of feelings so contrary to those in which they were indulging, they reverently inquired the cause of the tears. "Alas!" said he, "of all this vast multitude not one will be left upon the earth a hundred years hence." That was said more than two thousand years ago. How many generations have followed that over which he wept and uttered this sad truth! We occupy their places for a few days and then we lie beside them.

In the midst of such constant decay and death have your feet fixed on the Rock that crumbles not—the Rock of ages past and to come—on the Rock Christ Jesus. Then can you rejoice that, though death may seize upon your body as his rightful prey, after that he hath no more that he can do. The soul is safe. It shall pass into the unchanging yet ever-changing society of heaven. There the laws are perfect, friendship and love enduring, the faces of dear ones never grow pale and cold and resolve to dreadful dust, the funeral bell and train cast no gloom over happy homes. The cemetery, awful with all its greenness, bor-

ders not the river of the water of life. There is no Greenwood or Mount Auburn necessary for the New Jerusalem. The present old, sinful one is surrounded with graves—how emblematic of man!—the new with life. The death of Christ has accomplished this. The resurrection secured it. Let us on this glad day put our whole trust in that mighty Redeemer.



“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”—I John ii, 15-17.

“ We turn to dust, and all our mightiest works  
Die too : the deep foundations that we lay,  
Time plows them up, and not a trace remains.  
We build with what we deem eternal rock ;  
A distant age asks where the fabric stood ;  
And in the dust, sifted and searched in vain,  
The undiscoverable secret sleeps.”

“ Ere mountains reared their forms sublime,  
Or heaven and earth in order stood,  
Before the birth of ancient time,  
From everlasting thou art God.

“ To us, O Lord, the wisdom give  
Each passing moment so to spend,  
That we at length with thee may live  
Where life and bliss shall never end.”



#### IV.

#### MAN FAILS, GOD ABIDES.

THE disciple, in the days of John, was peculiarly situated. He not only had to deny himself every home delight, leaving parents and friends for the sake of the Gospel, but he was compelled to abandon the whole life of society, as it all set in an idolatrous direction. The world, to his eyes, was sin and only sin, and that continually. Upon the towering hills of his land rose the beautiful temples of idolatry. Lining the streets of every city were the tripods crowned with images that all were compelled to worship. In the stores and market places everywhere were idols and idol offerings for sale. Over the fireplace of the house, as on your mantels, or in niches about the dwelling, sat the home deities. Every festival was in honor of some god. In front of the audience sat the priests of the gods. Around the theater of Bacchus in Athens to-day, where were enacted the great dramas of Sophocles and Æschylus, the marble

chairs in the front row have inscribed upon them the names of the priests of the various divinities, Jupiter, Minerva, Apollo, and others through the list. The name of the theater itself, of its plays, of its chief dignitaries, of the city itself, were all commemorative of some deity, so called, so believed, so worshiped. The centers of political action were controlled by the same religiousness. The temples of Jupiter and Venus confront the forum at Pompeii, and the spot where Cicero spoke was surrounded with the temples and statues of the gods of Rome. If compelled to enter the army, as all were, he was required to acknowledge his national master as god. He must recognize the emperor not only as ruling by right divine, but as divine himself. He must choose between patriotism and idolatry. He must be guilty of treason to man or to God. Thus his life was seemingly inextricably involved in the surrounding superstition. He was not merely entangled in irreligion, he was involved in false religion. Its currents swept everywhere. Its waves covered the face of society. Fifteen fathoms higher than the highest mountains, social, civil, or literary, rolled

the great deluge. There was no possibility of escape.

What shall he do? How can he live amid such all-penetrating, all-controlling influences? He is born anew, yet born into a world with which he can have no sympathy, in which he cannot breathe one spiritual breath, whose touch is dangerous, whose communion is deadly. How shall he keep himself unspotted? If he pass the tripods in the street, he must make obeisance. If he purchase wares under the patronage of Mercury, is he not recognizing him as a god? If he buy the flesh offered to idols—for it is cheaper and better than the rest, and he is poor—will he not thereby become an idolater? If he visit his heathen friend's kinsfolk and partake of their hospitalities, is he not indorsing the superstition that presides at their feast? Thus is he in jeopardy every hour. Which way shall he turn? On every side is peril; snares and pitfalls abound.

Nay, more. His steps are watched by malignant eyes. He is disloyal if he will not bow, impious if he neglect the temples and shrines, a traitor to the state not less than to Olympus.

“Is not Socrates’ cell yet with us, where we made him drink the fatal hemlock, simply because he abstained from the worship of some of the gods? And shall you escape who say they are all no gods? If our greatest was done to death by official power for lack of faith, how much more you.”

Thus he is shut in by law, custom, prejudice, power. The lions roar for him in the arena, the fagots snap for him around the stake. On every side is death. In the midst of all these allurements and dangers what shall he do? How shall he escape both the flatteries and the frowns, the snares and the shafts, of the devil? How? By simply allowing the new life to grow to its full stature, by conferring not with flesh and blood, but by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, by letting the love of God be perfected in him; this will guide him with discretion; this will make him courageous where courage is demanded, prudent where prudence; this will lead him through the fascinations that glitter around him; this will strengthen him to meet cheerfully the dangers that await him; this will enable him to love not this present world, but to feel the raptures of the higher, the

highest love of and for the Father; this will make him walk serenely, his eyes uplifted to the heavenly hills, his soul marching on those eternal summits.

With us circumstances are altered. It is not false religion that allures us so much as irreligion. Not that false religions have ceased. Far from it. Not that they are altogether unpopular and unattractive. It is sad to confess that though Christ has been preached for six thousand years, and visibly, historically, and authoritatively preached for the last sixty generations, there are even in Christian countries those who set up another religion than his, who still deny, betray, and crucify him. But these are not all-powerful and everywhere powerful as were those. They are attempts to oppose an otherwise universal faith, not an otherwise universal idolatry attempting to subvert and absorb a little knot of Christians. "Great Pan is dead!" The great peril of today is not in false religion, but in irreligion. This yet lives if Pan the mighty is gone. The idols are tumbled from their shrines, but idolatry still abounds. The theaters do not assign by brass tablets and marble cuttings their

chief chairs to the clergy, but they still flaunt their attractions. Sin does not assert its godhead, but it does its power. The devil, if he has dropped the robe of deity, still wears that of pleasure. The saved soul is still compelled to walk amid temptations gay, bewildering, fatal.

How shall we dwell among them? That is the question for to-day. How shall we live among these sinful allurements, not only unse-duced but unmoved, unconscious that they exist about us? Are you really wishing to know? Would you not regret if that carnal passion in its sinful expression were eradicated from your heart? Ask yourself before God. Has not that passion got such hold upon you that you prefer to have God yield to it rather than it to God; that you desire to have religion modified so as to admit of that pleasure, rather than the desire for the pleasure abolished from the heart? Be honest with your Saviour. Search diligently. The central thought around which the text revolves is this: The love of God should be the law of our being. We should breathe every breath of our soul in and by this atmosphere. Every affection must revolve around this center, must draw life and

motion from him alone. The thing from which the Holy Ghost seeks to dissuade us is a separate love, one that interferes with or ranks itself above that supreme devotion. Come, then, a little closer about this delightful duty. You will find it demands nothing that is not agreeable to our highest nature, nothing that we shall not instinctively, irrepressibly crave if we allow that nature its legitimate direction and fullest indulgence.

The love of and for God includes all virtuous lower loves. He is the Author of every good and perfect gift. If we love the Author, we shall and must the gifts. If we love the gifts rightly, we shall the more love the Author. The joys of sense all flow from him. Who made your palate susceptible of exquisite delight when the viands, solidified odors, touch it? Who lined the organs of smell with nerves so delicate as to detect the subtlest fragrance floating in the air and cause them to send the thrills of their delights throughout the soul? If viands are solidified odors, odors are aerial viands, and feed the finer tissues of our being with their finer food. Who gave these insensate compounds of the kitchen and

the laboratory such ineffable grace? Who filled the world with harmonies, hiding them in the skins and entrails and hairs of beasts, in brass and wood and iron, and in our own throats? Who made the ear, a far from beautiful organ externally, capable of detecting melodies in the movements of the throat, the rubbing of string upon string, the blowing of wind through hollow pipes and reeds? Who gave the eye its apprehension of the infinite fascinations of nature and of art, and who gave nature and art those fascinations in which the eye revels? The joys of sense, are they not from God? And is he not greater than his gifts? Will he not be jealous, and justly so, if we put them in our regard above him? If you love the theater, which is alluring only because it has certain attractions which it has stolen from God and appropriated to his enemy, if you love it with eyes and ears whose virtues he has bestowed, will he not say, "You have robbed me of mine own. You have taken my gifts and appropriated them to self and sin?" So also of the superior blessings of life and love. Life is the gift of God. Why are you here, a sentient, a thinking, a volitional being? Why did



you ever live? How happens it that out of the dust you were taken and into that body of yours that soul of yours was breathed? Whence did you get your life? Did you ever think on this thought? We often dwell upon the thought that we may soon be dead, but rarely on the equally, nay, more mysterious one, that we ever lived. Death, dust, nothingness, is our natural estate, not life, thought, love. Wonderful, awful gift of God! You are not I. Your living does not necessitate my living. Your parents' living did not necessitate yours. Every one of us is, in the highest sense, as was Melchizedek in a priestly sense, without father or mother. The reply of the Catechism and of every parent to the question of the child as to who made him is a scientific truth. God, is their rightful answer. Not forces of nature, not combinations of forces, not man, but God, is the direct, the sole Author of every being. Each is an Adam, an original creation. That birth out of nothing was marvelous. So is ours alike marvelous. To live, to be, to know, to love, 'tis mystery all, and we adore. What it is no eye hath yet seen or can see. No chemist can track this

secret to its hiding-place, no metaphysician find this center alike of all physics and metaphysics—life. And yet many accept this sublime gift of God and never acknowledge him as the giver. You exercise all your faculties daily, full of life, and never turn grateful hearts to Him through whom, and through whom alone, you live and move and have your being. Nay, worse, we seize this marvelous gift of God and appropriate it to the very things he most abhors. We take our lives and devote them to our own selfish ends. We rush by the aid alone of our God-given energies into forbidden deeds and places and pleasures. We eat with organs made by him and kept alive by him the very fruit he forbids us to taste. God is despised, while the strength he imparts is stolen from him and perverted to all ungodliness. Ought he not to feel the insult and the crime?

But chiefly we pervert his greatest gift—love. The taste, the smell, the hearing, the seeing, the touch, that sense which surpasses all the rest in its diffusion and delicacy, which is the crown and glory of all other bodily gifts—these are much. Life is an astonishing gift. Yet all these perish and die before love. The first

are mere titillations of the soul ; that is, the mere existence of the soul. Love is the soul's self. It is the soul living, and living its intensest life. More than thought, more than resolve, more than all things, is love. Who gave you this "effluence of bright essence increate?" Who made you thrill with ecstasy at its lowest agitations? Who made you rejoice when a pleasant odor, taste, sight, or sound struck the nerve of sensation? Who made your eyes kindle with passion when they spoke love to eyes that spake again? Who stirred your soul, O mother, O father, with those unutterable agitations of bliss when that newborn babe was placed in your arms? Who kindled those unquenchable fires in the depths of your being—fires which warm and brighten the whole chamber of your innermost life and make that which was before, perhaps, a dungeon dripping with tears suddenly a palace brilliant with unspeakable glory? Who filled your heart, O son, with that yearning for your mother's arms and smile and kiss, and made you feel in the shelter of home the raptures of ineffable peace? Who makes your glad heart dance for joy, O

daughter, when you feel the strong paternal arms once more about you, and that protecting benediction falling smilingly upon you? Who gave us love in all its breadth and length and height and depth—love for nature and for man, for friend and country, for parent and companion and child, for pleasure and knowledge, “love, the divinest of the train and sovereign of the rest?” Who? God, God only. Had he not imparted this trait to your nature, you would have been as emotionless as a stone. Like the dust out of which you were taken, your heart would remain but dust. He gave it this divine electricity.

But another question rises “like an exhalation” to cover with its dark folds all this gladness and glory. How do we use this last, best gift of God, this very God and his highest expression? For “God is love.” My God, what a reply is forced from the reluctant soul at that question! How? This love that is given us that we may give it all back to him, we instantly seize, this his own nature, and wrest to ourselves and our sin. We change it to lust. The *ἀγάπη* becomes *ἐπιθυμία*; love, sweet, simple—like the lily of July, sheltered from fervent

rays, resting on the cool bosom of the lake, perfect in color and fragrance—lo ! it is changed to a hot and heating thing, an over-passion, a super-raging ; for the root of the word is raging, rushing ; its second derivative is the fleshly soul, the animal being hot and urgent and un-reasoning ; its third is both of these intensified. And that is what love becomes when perverted from God and made a creature of self and sin. It is no longer love, but lust.

All unlawful love is lust. Thus the apostle recognizes it. The lust of the eye, he calls it, not the love—that is lawful ; the lust of the flesh, not its love—that is symmetrical and divine. The hot, surging waves of distempered, unrestrained passion foaming out shame—that is what the soul turns into when it turns its back on its Creator and first Lover. Nay, more ; one perversity brews another. Love changed to lust corrupts the proper sense of life itself. It becomes a pride of life, the haughty confidence in this life as ours and completely within our control. “ It is mine. I will employ it as I will. I am not God’s steward ; I am my own master. I despise the Giver of life as I do the love that gave it. I

owe nothing to nobody—not even to my parents. I am my own creator.” This haughty spirit goeth before destruction, this ungodly pride before a fall.

These are not of the Father, but of the world. They are perversions of that affection and respect which eye and heart should pay to the Lord of life and love. They are proclamations of independence. They declare that the soul which they are and which they have become has renounced its allegiance to its Creator, has set up its own throne in its own nature, has gone over to God’s enemy and its <sup>own</sup> and will have nothing more to do with God, will have none of his ways or intimacy. It is in revolt, and seeks to be what it never can be—independent.

How shall the soul recover its lost estate? How shall it restore these revolting affections to their obedience? By first fixing them upon God. The rebellious must first show repentance, and feel it even, by accepting the Head from whom they revolted. Had our Revolutionary fathers returned to their allegiance, it would not have been the Parliament that they would have accepted as their head, but the king, for from him they especially revolted.

It was the king whom they fought in the Declaration, the king they fought in the field; it must be the king whom they shall first accept if they return at all. So our later rebels, who cast off their allegiance to the flag, must accept that allegiance ere they are truly, inwardly, completely loyal. They must revere it, honor it, serve it. That is the symbol of national authority: that is the symbol by which is tested their entire, hearty restoration.

Even so must we all, rebels against God, resume our loyalty by fixing our hearts' desires upon God himself. We must cry out, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." We must feel that to him our restored relations cordially cling. God is love. He has given us love. We have corrupted it into lust. He asks its restoration. We grant it. To whom must we go but to him? Our first pulsation, were we not fallen, would be to him. "I delight to do thy will, O my God!" With Christ would we say, It is more than my meat and my drink to do the will of Him that sendeth me. Meat and drink only sustain the union of body and soul, while soul and body are rapt into this heavenly

service. Thus felt our first parents until a lower passion thrust God from his throne in their souls and drove them into rebellion against God. To restore lost relations there must be a restoration of lost affections, and the highest affection is for God the Lord.

The processes in which this rebellion is here depicted must be restored. The eye craves many things the heart or flesh is indifferent to, the flesh or heart many the eye cares not for. Each must like its own, but in the Lord and to the Lord. The eye is fascinated with pictures, facial angles and expressions, mere combinations of sun and shadows, mere variations of light; for that is all that makes up scenery or eye effects. These have no necessary connection with the heart. One may visit the theater merely from a love for its shows, with no real motions of the heart in their presence. Children and youth usually put the two together, but men and women rarely do. They can see and even share in the dance without emotion. Not so the young. They unite instantly the heat engendered by seeing with that of the flesh or whole animal being. The two lusts breed lust lustily. The soul is corrupted



almost as soon as it sees. The bones of the poor youth thus cast to the lions of temptation are broken ere they come to the bottom of the den. But the passion centering in the eye grows weaker with use and age. One gets tired of the most entrancing paintings, and can wander through great galleries as carelessly as through a workshop. So he can become indifferent to scenery, to spectacles of every sort, so even he can become passionless before sinful scenes. But if he is not a Christian the lust of the flesh increases with years, increases rapidly, fiercely, and exhausts the entire strength of his being, but exhausts not its own desires. See it in the appetite for tobacco or strong drinks. There is nothing beautiful in a pack of black leaves, an oiled and begrimed pipe, or a tumbler of yellowish fluid. Yet how many men will eat and drink these homely substances! Pressing the black mud down their throats as Pacific Islanders do their rolls of rice dough, draining draught after draught of delirious whisky as if it were the water of life, eating it, drinking it in, the eye sees naught and hence can feed no lust of its own. A president of a turnverein, who had

been converted and become a Methodist minister, said that when president he was officially required to drink a gallon of beer at a draught. If he stopped to breathe he lost his chair. He had often done it. He had drunk a "schooner" as each stroke of twelve was struck at midnight—twelve glasses in twelve strokes. When asked what the sensation was, "Nothing," he replied, "but simply to get it down. The throat was only a tunnel. There was no pleasure. It was merely business."

Such is often the lust of the flesh—powerful, irresistible, but not enjoyable. The lust for money is of this sort. Multitudes crave it for itself, not for what it produces, not for its looks. A greasy, ragged bank bill of a high denomination is far lovelier to their eye than a new one of lower value. The passion grows by what it feeds on, until the one absorbing passion is to accumulate. Such is the lust of the debauchee, of the gambler, of the man of the world. This is the passion of every one who seeks pleasure in vile books, talk, and society, in all the low, hidden, dark, but most powerful currents of society.

Mixed with these is the spirit of arrogance

that finds expression in the Pharisee's prayer, "I thank Thee that I am not as other men are;" that subtle sense of self-confidence and self-satisfaction that ranks itself above its neighbors and haughtily assumes the supremacy. It is not the exclusive property of the rich or of ancient families, so called, though here it flowers into its most gorgeous forms and colors. It is found in every sinner's heart; in yours, if you say, "I do not believe God will condemn me. Me? How can he? What have I done? Do I not lead a decent life? Do I lie, or steal, or murder? Am I such a villain as that thief or forger? Am I to be put by the side of that sinful creature? Do you dare to place me on a level with a Negro or a Chinaman?" There is your pride of life. There is your seat of death. How many a man as proud, as good outwardly, perhaps inwardly, as you, has, in the late calamities, been proved as low as the lowest, and been compelled to take his seat by their side in the criminal docket, put on the same prison garments, sleep in the same stone cell? You say, "I sin not;" therefore your sin remaineth.

All these passions thus indulged come be-

tween the soul and God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." You cannot have two perfect and perfectly equal loves at the same time. Nay, you cannot have two perfect and perfectly equal loves at two different times. You may have many a perfect love, but none perfectly equal. They are rank above rank. The first love, that of the child for its parents, may be perfect, but it is of lower rank than that of wife and husband, lower than that of parents for the child. Each love may be perfect after its kind, but the kinds are set in order as the ranks of heaven—"thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers." One star differeth from another star in glory, so doth one love from another.

But if the love of this kind is perfect, that love can never in its essence be improved upon. If the soul has gone out in its fullness toward another soul, that outgoing can never be duplicated. It can never so go out toward any other object. It has exhausted itself in that direction, not to its ceasing to live in that love, for cease to live therein it cannot. If it abides in its normal state and the coordinate soul is perfectly fitted by corresponding de-

velopments to the growing estate of its fellow-spirit, it will never cease to feel that here it has reached its created being's height. The only problem unsolved is, is this the love of its best and for its best? If not, then decay and death inevitably come. The ages leave each counterpart outgrown by the other. Such may be the fate of all created loves. Born, they may die; beginning, they may end; of and for and in the creature, they may be limited by creatural, that is, finite, that is, perishable, conditions. If they live forever, it is only because they live in God, through his power and love who keepeth them.

Only one true, one perfect love can possess the soul. No passion for a human being, however deep and tender and immeasurable, can draw out the whole nature. The mother's love feels its first shock when she learns that she is third at last in the list of loves, wife and child being preferred before her, and crowding her from her long, unquestioned prominence. So all loves may find their end. If they remain, they are found in God. Only one love may thus exist—eternal; it is well; because duality is the law of our being, and duality abides

forever. The only love that answers every craving of the soul is the love of God ; that quickens it in all its nature ; that moves it in its lowest depths. The moon only draws the surface of the sea to itself ; God draws the entire being.

Other loves have relative ranks and rivals. This allows none. It is God or nothing. If any man love the world separate from, superior to, God, the love of the Father is not in him. Jealous beyond the conception of Othello's rage is our Creator ; his anger burns against all such idolatry to the lowest hell.

This does not prevent all true loves flourishing to their uttermost. It requires their full activity. They are in God, and to God, while he is in and above them all, God blessed forever. The parent's passion glows the more purely if in and to the Lord ; the lover's sighs are breathed the more fervently and holily if in the Lord ; the holy flame of wedlock is most perfect when the Lord is in the center of its sacred sweetness. Love for knowledge—how delicious when the devout heart pursues the divine investigations, for knowledge is all divine, a part of the all-knowledge of God.

Even fame or recognition of real merit may be an honorable passion if it raises the clear spirit to its Creator; and heroism for principle, that highest love that can possess the soul of man, that makes him, weeping, set down his babes and unloose the embraces of his wife, that he may die for the truth—is not that found in its uttermost of perfection when that heroic ardor of love burns for the Lord Jesus? John Brown was a saint of high degree—he died for man; John Huss of higher—he died for the Lord Jesus, who was more than man. These loves are all blessed when in the Lord, and then only.

Consider, finally, the endurance of this love. “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” How sad, how sure that truth—the world passeth away and the lust thereof! Where now is the world of the days of John, and where its lust? I have sat near the spot where he probably wrote those words, amid the very landscape on which he then gazed. That city of Ephesus, the richest in all the East, its temple so imposing, its theater so magnificent, its baths so luxurious, its bazars

so rich and thronged, its lust of pride so enormous—where is it now? A few broken marble columns stand on a rude hill, shattered pillars lie in confusion around. The great arches of the Roman viaduct yet stretch across the plain like a straggling, routed cohort of a once grand legion. The hills that rise abruptly between the plain and the shore, once crowded with villas, temples, and statues, now stand bare, stripped of every vestige of their glory. The great temple of Diana has not had left one stone upon another that is not cast down. Cattle graze in quietness along the once crowded thoroughfare, and the Turkish peasant turns up with his rude plow the arena where Paul fought with wild beasts, and multitudes of Christians, all known of men, went gloriously up to God and heaven. The world passeth away. But more than the change in the face of the world is that in the souls of those then proud and lustful there. Where are they now? The last has passed away long since and utterly. The hills and valley and sea and sky remain; John could still know Ephesus by its natural features; but where are its men? Where are those that thronged the theater and



cried for a day, almost, to stop the mouth of Paul, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians?" Where are the Ephesians or their great goddess? Where the silversmiths with Demetrius at their head? Where the fashionable loungers in the baths? Where those that disdained God and desired the world? Answer, O poor, fluttering, wavering heart, that wishes to love both God and the world! Their lust went before their world. They left it, not it them. So must we. Not before you die will your cities become what Ephesus is; you will leave them probably as full of sin, of worldly fascination, as they are to-day; but lust passes away, passes to where there is no place for its indulgence, where it rages unsatisfied, like the troubled sea, without rest, yet evermore casting up mire and dirt. The rich man longs for water; the appetite remains, but not the water; he probably still prefers the wine, but no wine is given him.

Cool your hot lusts, quench them rather, in the love of God that abideth forever. He that doeth his will, he that loveth God and showeth his love by his works, he shall live and love forever. Death hath no dominion over him.

It is but the entrance gate to higher life, to more ardent, more perfect, more rewarded love. If the Lord can give us here such proof of his love, such objects of permitted love as the scenes and odors and sounds of earth, as the thoughts that kindle our souls, the aspirations that uplift them, the emotions that thrill them, and, above all, the loves that satisfy and well-nigh satiate them, so that we cry even now under their delirious delight, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love," how much more will he ravish the soul loving him with the abundance of eternal love! Our earthly loves will not die, but increase there more and more. We shall love there, not only human friends, with an unfathomable ardor such as we never knew here, but angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, all the ranks and races of heaven. We shall love those who go there far beyond what we ever felt upon earth, and those who have always dwelt there with an ardor for which earthly affection has no name.

"O sweet and blessed country,  
The home of God's elect!  
O sweet and blessed country  
That eager hearts expect!"

Still, then, as now, then, more than now, above all these blissful passions, in them all; through them all, shall we love our God and Saviour, the Beloved of all holy creatures, the Beloved to eternity.

O my brother, can you hesitate which to love? Whoever hesitates never truly loves. Debate not; cast yourself at his feet, into his arms. He will kindle this holy flame in your soul; he will deliver you from counter and hostile passions. You can pass among them as a mother with her child in her arms passes among crowds of other children without feeling a divided affection. You can say,

“Henceforth shall no profane delight  
Pollute this consecrated soul.”

You will leap to meet his kind embrace; you will run in the way of his commandments; you will be ravished with his love. Let the world see that you love him; glory in it. The beginnings of all human true love are in a sort of shame. We shrink from confessing the passion kindling within; we are ashamed to let it be known. The lover at the first hides his love, the wedded and the parent theirs. So is it in this highest love. But as in these

earthly affections they cannot be repressed, and delight at last in exhibiting themselves to all the world, and, if they can, write themselves into verse and thrust themselves into the eye of strangers and of futurity, so this highest passion may begin in a sense of shame. It shrinks from confessing Christ; it is ashamed of Jesus. It visits him at night; it fears the scorn of the world. But when once aflame it glories in revealing itself. It proclaims itself everywhere and to everybody. It makes its recipient go among neighbors and kinsfolk, arise in crowded assemblies, ascend the pulpit, fly to foreign and pestilential lands, stand serenely before hostile magistrates, enter the dens of lions,

“Clasp the cross with a light laugh,  
Or wrap the burning robe round, praising God.”

Such love will only glow the brighter when these tests of its vigor fail to weaken, and aid in strengthening it. It will burn like a star in the eternal heavens and respond forever to the infinite love of its divine Lover, the Lord our God.

Love, then, the Lord your God with all your might and mind and strength, and he will love

you with all his might and mind and strength. He will come and take up his abode in you. He will bear you in his arms amid the losses and sorrows of this transient time, beam upon you with serene and tender regard, accompany you through the last portal of earth and the first of heaven, and be your Companion, your Lover, through the realm of the ages of eternity.

“And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”—Mark x, 16.

“ Not of adamant and gold  
Built God heaven, stark and cold ;  
No, but a nest of bending reeds,  
Flowering grass, and scented weeds ;  
Or like a traveler's fleeing tent,  
Or bow above the tempest bent ;  
Built of tears and sacred flames,  
And virtue reaching to its aims ;  
Built of furtherance and pursuing ;  
Not of spent deeds, but of doing.  
Silent rushes the swift Lord  
Through ruined systems still restored,  
Broad sowing, bleak and void to bless,  
Plants with worlds the wilderness,  
Waters with tears of ancient sorrow  
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.  
House, not tenant, goes to ground  
Raised to God. In Godhead found.”

V.

TAKING CHILDREN IN HIS ARMS.

A PICTURE hangs on the walls of the National Gallery of England combining, it is said, more of genius, science, art, and religion than have been witnessed in any painting for more than four centuries. Yet scarcely one of the crowd of gazers fixes seeing and feeling eyes upon it. The commonplace productions of commonplace talent fill the measure of their sight and soul, and the heights and depths of truth, beauty, and power which this one painting alone embodies are unpierced, unperceived by them. So the marvelous work which only the genius, science, art, and love of God could produce, a little child, placed in the gallery of human products, attracts slight attention, is passed by with a glance, while a crystal palace, a monster ship, a great city, or an eclipse draws crowds of overwhelmed spectators, and the most common objects and incidents of the paltriest life are subjects of constant notice and remark.

As this little one, fashioned of the dust of the earth and the Spirit of God, is thus neglected while placed before our eyes, so when the great Artist destroys its marvels with one dash of his pencil, takes it down from the wall, and hides it in that cellar of humanity, the grave, its absence occasions as little remark as its presence had done. Why it is gone, whither it has gone, are questions curiosity rarely suggests. A few who happened in its neighborhood when the catastrophe occurred noticed the act of removal, though not the gap made by it, and may have felt one throb of sympathy for the disappointed owner, none for the lost and ruined work.

The death of a man is noticed, because an impress has been made by him on the surrounding community. Every one has had his own nature modified more or less by his influence; every one, therefore, feels that a part of himself, of his substance and his daily life, has disappeared, and a momentary sense of loss shadows and shakes his soul. Wherever this impress has not been made, death makes none. Your neighbor may die and your soul darken and droop beneath the loss,



but a little farther the blow has expended its force. No sense of the loss and no thought of the dead is found there. Death in the country, like sound and light and air, moves over a much larger surface than in the city before its momentum expires. So, too, the death of the aged reaches farther than the death of children.

In the chamber separated from you by the breadth of two bricks a man or woman, head of a large family, may be dying and you be as unaffected as though it were a flower or a fly. I sat with friends in St. Louis dining and chatting through an afternoon. At nightfall word came that the husband of the household adjoining, in a room only one thickness of brick from us, had been dying all that time we were chatting so pleasantly, and was then lying dead. Why is this insensibility? Because the density of the population contracts the range of our sympathies, and that family whom that thin wall separated from us was farther from us than if five miles away in a thinly settled village or fifty miles on the frontiers of civilization.

Hundreds of souls go down on our coast in

a single ship and night, and possibly, though you read the incident in a brief line of the newspaper, the fact has so slightly affected the memory that you could not after a little recall it. A steamer starts from Europe and is never heard from. Its freight of hundreds of human beings has been whelmed in terror and agony and death, but no sympathetic terror or agony has startled our soul even for a moment. Thousands and thousands of Russians and Turks went to that awful, silent judgment seat from the roar and dust and groans of the battlefield, but your soul was sensible of no change in its pulsations as you glanced at the narratives of those deathbeds.

Thus it always is. Unless we find ourselves united by some tie of nature, or office, or experience with the dead, death is apt to be an impressionless event to us. Had Dickens been aboard that steamer, each of us would have been full of zeal and knowledge concerning the catastrophe, because he had made himself a part of our being by the children of his soul, his by birth, ours by adoption. Had General Grant fallen on one of those European fields of death, we should have all felt the fall because

he had become a part of our feelings and thoughts, an element and portion of our spirits' growth.

So the lack of these connective influences in infants makes us insensible as to their death. The child playing at our door may have more than once revived our weary hearts with its uncareful merriment, more than once feasted our craving for the beautiful, the unearthly, by its unconscious loveliness, its heaven-revealing gladness and goodness. That child, dead, is the filling with desert dust one of the fountains which was refreshing our wilderness wanderings, is the dropping of a black and pierceless veil over an opening through which heaven shone in upon us and we looked up into heaven. We feel the pang; our very being has been invaded. Death has smitten us in the vitals. An infant gives no such shock. He has not fed our lasting lives daily with his fresh heavenly manna. He has no conscious vital connection with us. His death sheds no mortal shudderings through our soul.

All this is wrong. It is a perversion of our nature. God never made it so contracted. The Pacific Islander eats but one kind of food cooked

in but one way. So the coolie of India lives on rice alone, the serf of Ireland on the potato, the peasant of Italy on maccaroni ; but the more cultivated we become the wider is the range both of articles for food and modes of preparing them for our use. The appetite grows in sensitiveness, looks on all nature as appointed for its physical sustenance, apprehends the declaration made by its Creator to Adam and Noah, " Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed ; to you it shall be for meat. . . . Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you ; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

So the soul wrought upon by the wisdom and the grace of God becomes alive to all the joys and sorrows, the sentiments and thoughts, of every other soul, dwells with the infant on the shoulders of his Indian mother or in the cradle of royal luxury, with the child playing under Africa's palms or in his own garden, the youth dreamy and hopeful in Arabia or America, the man or woman, white, black, or red, that lives in sadness or joy, in comfort or

misery, over the whole earth. Yea, more; our natures, rightly working, feed on the blisses of the holy departed of all ages, mingle sadly yet salutarily with the unholy departed of every age, rise into higher, dive into lower ranks of creation, and rest at last, rest in the perpetual but peaceful motion of our whole being, in the center and source of all activity, of all creation—God.

In the shadow of a great affliction, at the table where for hour after hour lay the body but just abandoned by an infant immortal, I write, partly as a memorial of him, partly to bring to a focus in my own soul the rays of heaven scattered through the valley of the shadow of death wherein I have been walking; partly to console those over whom have passed like waves of sorrow, whose founts of love, opened by sympathy in this bereavement, pour forth over their own hearts the lifeblood of affection as fresh and agonizing as in the hours when their hearts were first pierced through with this sorrow; partly to awaken, if possible, in each of us a sense, quick and weighty, of the truths which God publishes afresh to us with every such event, and

which are as valuable, and can be used as profitably, if announced through infant sufferings, death, and glory, as though written before us in the death of the aged, the honored, the mighty. A little child shall lead them. May it lead us, submissive and reverent, into the gallery of God's truths, into the deep and holy feelings those truths would fain induce and develop!

The wiser one becomes in any branch of knowledge, the more does he neglect the large and observe the small; the more does he see in the small the larger. Men, untrained, possess no such discrimination; they are affected by the huge, but they pass coldly by the minute. A mountain, not a pebble, a forest, not a grass-blade, the ocean, not a globule of water, attracts them. Not so the studious, growing mind. Whatever department it works in—mechanics, art, science, philosophy—everywhere the real thinker is seen in his neglect for the mass and his attention to the atom. One analyzes, analyzes, till he finds a universal law, working perfectly and gloriously in the falling apple; another crystallizes the microscopic diamond particle; another combines elements to

the composition of one drop of water ; another employs vast assimilative powers and processes to endeavor to construct a living mustard seed. As the enlightened curiosity has worked in the mind of the scholar, so parental instincts operate in respect to the infant. As every truth concerning any creature lies condensed in every particle of that truth, so lies the whole of man in the babe ; and nature, or Father, the God of nature, places in parental hearts the very impulse and intelligence that in a far inferior degree, and of a far lower character, lead the scholar to the perception of the laws of creative working.

Far lower in character and degree, I say ; for what was ever brought before man in the realms of matter comparable to a human body ? And how infinitely this falls below the human soul ! Agassiz devoted his great mind and great knowledge to the study of the traits and distinctions of fishes, Linnæus of plants, Audubon of birds, Cuvier and Owen of beasts, Hitchcock of rocks, Newton of light ; the highest students only dwell upon the laws of mind. But to the parent is given the study of the finest and most wonderful of material products,

beside which birds and beasts and rocks and trees are gross and mean ; and to this, what is more, the study of the development of a spirit, the image of God. They can at once see its present perfection and its future growth and glory. As it lies in their arms do they not see the perfect features of the man, as beautiful in their perfection as if expanded into their full and ultimate growth? Is not every limb, muscle, tendon, bone, as exquisitely wrought and fitted? Does not every feature of the face speak the same workman as if in gigantic proportions? Does not the head, emblem of the perfection of the whole body, round off and crown the whole with its complete mechanism and its lofty suggestions? And if you look within those eyes, gleams there not forth the same fire of thought and feeling that maturer years and experiences kindle? Plays not as perfect a smile around those cheeks, flows not as perfect laughter from those lips? Love and thought lie lustrous in the depths of those eyes. The soul, the immortal, the divine soul, you see at the bottom of those clear founts, as pearls and diamonds through pellucid waves.



“ Fair the soul’s recess and shrine,  
Magic built, to last a season ;  
Masterpiece of love divine,  
Fairer than expansive.”

Can a parent be aught else than the wisest of students if he bends with loving scrutiny over this work of God? Can he be acting otherwise than in accordance with the divine Being in thus dwelling in studious admiration over that upon which God ponders, which God watches, admires, pronounces very good?

Parental love not only feasts on the treasure for what it is, but for what it is to be. If the development theory were a true one; if stone grew into tree, tree to reptile, reptile to fish, fish to bird, bird to beast, beast to man; if the naturalist has found clear proof of some of these transmigrations, how greatly would their zeal be increased to detect the phenomena and laws of that expansion! But they see no such realities to their dreams. Impassable walls engirt every order, and each member of his order fully reveals the whole. The youngest is as the oldest. No such limit is imposed on man. The infant humanity can fill the whole heaven of parental hopes with dreams and visions of the future—not schemes of ambition,

but promptings of the judgment colored with the hues of a wise though loving fancy. He sees that soul tasting of knowledge, little and weak, as that which feeds its body ; growing in strength, demanding larger and stronger supplies ; sipping wisdom like the bee from the flower, the tree, the sky—every object in nature and in art ; getting glimmerings of conversation, of communion with spirits by other processes than the eye and hand afford ; absorbing into its mind the alphabetical elements, combining them, using them for the body of its ideas and feelings ; bringing forth from the treasure-house of the soul these new creations of spirit ; feeding these creative faculties by observation, by conversation, by reading ; learning that itself and surrounding souls are not the only beings of like nature on the earth, that for myriads and myriads of hours there have been breathing this air not only those like itself, but related to itself, held all in the arms of one father and mother ; learning the yet more startling truth that almost all that multitude of relatives has left the earth and gone no one knows whither, are engaged no one knows how ; feeling in its tiny

spirit promptings to sin ; learning how generally and awfully those promptings have prevailed, how its Creator, the God of the universe, has come into such a little body as its that he might give it, and all, the chance of escaping from these sins, how he has put a Book into the world abounding in marvelous truths and clear commands that are intended to aid it in growing in holiness and wisdom ; looking out from this spot of time on the vastness of eternity ; looking up from this state of mixed light and darkness into the heavens of holy light, down into the seat of awful darkness—these and multitudes of similar truths are to be imparted to that soul. Is there not a space of amplest breadth for the growth and flourishing of every hope and desire ? God creates that soul, it is true. God gives it its powers and capacities. God gives the increase of those powers. Yet he has marvelously arranged it so that they seem to be given to the parental hand to bring into being. They lie asleep, dead, till his or another's touch calls them to life.

The babe of heathenism is of closest kindred with the child of Christendom ; that poor, ig-

norant Bushman or Eskimo infant has the capacities of him whose brain calls Wordsworth its father. The one lies shut up in cells of darkness, the other is led forth into light. God makes the parent, in effect, a creator of the soul of the child, and he can exultingly assume the charge and hopefully undertake it. Parental comforts find their present and especially their prospective homes in their children. They enjoy the reciprocity which has already begun, the tiny recognition repaying every sacrifice and toil. They see the day when, ere long, larger responses will be made. They dwell on the hour when equality of thought and feeling shall make the babe a perfect companion and associate; when their growing weakness shall be more than replaced by its fiery energies; and farther yet, when, as age shall enfeeble all their powers and death be busy finishing up the work he has never neglected all their lives, the strong arms of the infant, as loving as when they clasped their neck in its early helplessness, as strong as theirs when then bearing him, shall support the dying head, shall compose the dead body, shall lay it in tender sorrow and cheerful hope

to sleep away the fatigues and infirmities of life and to rise in vigor and beauty undying at the coming of Christ. This love, this hope, this anticipated duty, this comfort—all these, in their vast and varied workings, are found in full action in the parental heart, while infantile helplessness, ignorance, and innocence slumbers or smiles upon it. Hence the word of God has but few words repeated as often as the word children, and makes but few references either in the way of doctrine or entreaty more frequently or powerfully than those pertaining to the parental relation. Hence, too, his favorite disclosure of himself as our Father and Christ as his only-begotten and well-beloved Son. With insight into this truth the heavenly hosts shouted over the Infant cradle and wise men knelt in adoration and poured forth gifts. Hence every great uninspired seer has honored the infant man as highly as the adult man. Says the great Shakespeare :

“ And in such indexes, although small pricks  
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen  
The baby figure of the giant mass  
Of things to come at large.”

Hence exclaims the poet, at once the most human in his sensibilities, the most divine in

his musings, of all those whose thoughts move in harmonious numbers, looking on an infant child :

“ Thou whose exterior semblance doth belie  
 Thy soul's immensity !  
 Thou best philosopher who yet dost keep  
 Thy heritage ! Thou eye among the blind,  
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep  
 Haunted forever by the eternal mind !  
 Mighty prophet ! seer blest !  
 On whom those truths do rest  
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find :  
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;  
 Thou over whom thy immortality  
 Broods like the day—a master o'er a slave—  
 A presence which is not to be put by ;  
 Thou little child, yet glorious in the light  
 Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height.”

And one, the greatest of living thinkers, exclaims, as his mind pierces the mists of the heart, made by his blinding tears like the sun shining through the shower :

“ The south winds bring their precious gifts,  
 Life, sunshine, and desire ;  
 And on every mount and meadow  
 Breathes aromatic fire.  
 But over the dead he has no power,  
 The lost, the lost he cannot restore ;  
 And looking over the hills I mourn  
 The darling who shall not return.  
 I see my empty house,  
 I see my trees repair their boughs ;

But he, the wondrous child,  
Whose silver warble wild  
Outvalued every passing sound  
Within the air's cerulean round,  
The hyacinthine boy, for whom  
Iron well might break and April bloom,  
The gracious boy who did adorn  
The world whereinto he was born,  
And by his countenance repay  
The favor of the loving day,  
Has disappeared from the Day's eye.  
Far and wide she cannot find him ;  
My hopes pursue, they cannot bind him.  
Returned this day, the south wind searches,  
And finds young pines and budding birches,  
But finds not the budding man."

Again he cries out :

" Not mine ; I never called thee mine,  
But nature's heir ; if I repine  
It is because a general hope  
Was quenched, and all must doubt and grope.  
For flattering planets seemed to say  
This child should ill of ages stay ;  
By wondrous tongue and guided pen  
Bring the flown muses back to men."

And with strict unity with parental grief and  
prophecy he bursts forth :

" O child of Paradise,  
Boy who made dear his father's home,  
In whose deep eyes  
Was read the welfare of the time to come !  
I am too much bereft ;  
The world dishonored thou hast left.

O truth's and nature's costly lie !  
 O trusted broken prophecy !  
 O richest fortune sourly crossed !  
 Born for the future, to the future lost."

Another hopefully exclaims :

"O child ! O new-born denizen  
 Of life's great city ! On thy head  
 The glory of the morn is shed  
 Like a celestial benison.  
 Here at the portal thou dost stand,  
 And with thy little hand  
 Thou openest the mysterious gate  
 Into the future's undiscovered land.  
 Like the new moon, thy life appears  
 A little strip of silver light,  
 And widening outward into night  
 The shadowy disk of future years ;  
 And yet upon its outer rim  
 A luminous circle, faint and dim,  
 And scarcely visible to us here,  
 Rounds and completes the perfect year :  
 A prophecy and intimation,  
 A pale and feeble admiration,  
 Of the great world of light that lies  
 Behind all human destinies."

And yet another bursts forth :

"O thou ! bright thing fresh from the hand of God !  
 The motion of thy dancing limbs is swayed  
 By the unceasing music of thy being ;  
 Nearer I seem to God when looking on thee.  
 'Tis ages since he made his youngest star ;  
 His hand was on thee as 'twere yesterday,  
 Thou later Revelation ! Silver streams divine  
 Breaking with laughter from the lake  
 Whence all things flow, O bright and singing child !"



From these movings of the heart and the judgment in the great representatives of humanity, from the words of our blessed Lord, from the natural and God-implanted workings of parental hearts, come rebukes to the careless and stolid and contemptuous manner in which we are apt to treat the youngest of immortal souls—angels of God in the beginning of their creation.

The microscope is as marvelous as the telescope, the worlds unveiled by it as full of life, of wisdom, of goodness, of power, as those swinging before the larger eye of its brother. Though you were permitted to stand before the angel Gabriel, though you mingled in free and yet teachable intercourse with Paul, the knowledge gained from their sublimated and exalted natures is no higher, no purer, no richer, no sweeter, than that gleaned from faithful and reverent devotion to their youngest brethren—the babe Gabriel or Paul that folds its shining wings, covers them with the dust of earth, and by the slow and feeble steps of mortality grows to its archangelic expansion.

But if a child is an immortal soul at the dawn of its being, and if God has put such treasures

in earthen vessels and placed them among earthen vessels, we may properly ask, Is there any reason discernible for the frequency with which these vessels are broken? If he honors parental feelings by declaring himself the Parent of parents, and rewards their indulgence with the streams of joy that, quenchless and fathomless, flood their hearts, well may we ask, Why break those exquisite though clayey bodies? Why does his parental foot trample on every parental sensibility? Why place black gates of death between those tides of human feeling and their desired, their necessary, reservoir? Why shall He who sets the solitary in families make the family a solitude? Many a bleeding heart, since Adam and Eve bowed in speechless woe over their stricken Abel, has cried out as if reproaching heaven and earth:

“ Was there no star that could be sent,  
No watcher in the firmament,  
No angel from the countless host  
That loiters round the crystal coast,  
Could stoop to heal that darling child,  
Nature’s sweet marvel, undefiled,  
And keep the blossom on the earth  
Which all her harvests were not worth?”

Let us try to see if there are possible tokens of the goodness and wisdom of God, both to

parents and children, in such an early separation.

It is a blessing to the child physically. The load of the flesh is a wearisome burden. It is a coffin that the soul ever carries with it. Like the shirt of Nessus, burning the body it covered, it burns and wastes the spirit. It is a vehicle of disease and suffering and helplessness. The body craves rest and stupefies the spirit in its nightly stagnations. The body absorbs heat, and the spirit thrills with fire; cold, and it shivers as if pent in ice. It breathes poisons, and the spirit reels with faintness. It drinks or eats, and the soul staggers or lies stupid by its surfeitings. The body is, at the highest, of the earth, earthy; its highest aims are, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? wherewithal shall I be clothed?" It works on the farm, in the shop, the store. It makes the soul its slave and teaches her to coin her wit into bread and clothing for itself, makes her invent processes for more largely supplying its wants, and exhaust herself in devising means for gathering dust, and looks out on the field, through the factory, the shelves of the storehouse, as the widest allowable range for her

faculties. Multitudes on multitudes thus feel the weight of these chains of flesh. Thus are our young aspirations crushed, and we work under the lash of base appetites of hunger and gain till we are as incapable of seeing any super-earthly, spiritual, immortal essence within us as is the vilest slave driver in his vilest slave.

From this dread degradation the heaven-called child is released. That son shall not go into the far country of bodily passions and lusts and feed swine. He will not feel the ragings of disease more intense than the body itself can feel. He will not parch with thirst, rage with hunger, burn with heat, freeze with cold, throb with pain in head or heart or any other part of the body ; he will not be enslaved to his own servant, the gross duties of this life, and, what is worse, as almost all his kindred do who are left on earth for a little season, fall in love with its bondage, crave gold and land and goods and houses and stuff to tickle the palate and fantastic vanities to cover the body, and thus be filled with the lust of money, of dress, of food, of every bodily appetite. That spirit, thanks be to God, has escaped all this, and when its body is given him again he will

find no tendencies within, nor customs around him, to produce so loathsome yet so sadly universal a defilement.

Again, God's goodness and wisdom are seen in the mental privileges secured by death. He wishes to give the mind a fitting development by making it rightly apprehend appropriate truths. Where can such opportunities be given it as in heaven? Our science is yet childish in its attainments, is mixed with error, abounds in absurdities, has no perceived bond of union connecting all branches in fitting proportions and harmony. There is a scrap of knowledge here and there, a rag or two of the robe of truth which no skill of ours can form into its lustrous garment or even neatly or naturally join together. The mind must in its best estate and advantages grow amid great ignorance, introduce into its composition great errors, and be but dwarfish and deformed. We fall down before some minds as though possessed of miraculous attainments and power; it is we who are pygmies, not they giants. The best condition for the growth of these powers is seldom obtained. Poverty or contracted notions on our part make us curb the aspirations

and compress the brain in the iron helmet of our ignorance and avarice.

These necessary or voluntary restraints the little child that is carried to heaven never suffers. No poverty crushes out the life of its intellect. No lowness of parental sentiment nor wrongfulness of parental judgment debases or distorts it. No narrowness of scholarly prejudice nor bewilderment of contending factions on these fields of thought contracts or maddens its reason. That spirit sees, through glasses adapted to its vision, truths fitted to its wants. It settles the vexed questions of the schools; it stands in no doubt as to the conflicts of scholars on light, on life, on creation, on the essential qualities of the mind, on the higher, and hence darker, problems of theology. It looks out on nature (for nature is everywhere) with an eye that never betrays it into error. Its teachers and guides know what they teach, know in what measures and modes to impart their truths, how to feed it with knowledge and understanding. What a glorious school in which to study, with holy mothers and nurses to lead its yet immature soul to the reception of childish truth, with the great and wise of all

ages—Abraham and Moses and Solomon and Paul, Newton and Locke and Chalmers and Foster, mightiest minds in the human annals—to slake its thirst at streams that have no taint of error, with angels and archangels weaving their little less than infinite thoughts into its mind, with Christ, the head of that school, taking the little ones into his arms and answering the questions with which he confounded the doctors! What is your knee, sad mother, what your school, your academy, your university, as a gymnasium for that spirit's growth beside the knee of that angel, that school, that university, which is, indeed, a universe of which great spirits once in the flesh are the teachers and Christ is the Principal?

And then the history it studies; not that of earth alone, though that it has far more perfectly than earthly records give it to us, for we know nothing of antediluvian ages and but little of much that followed. It learns all of this from the lips of that grand mother of it and all, or from other equally affectionate and understanding souls; and besides, the history of man on the earth, the history of man in the heavens—the history of the whole crea-

tion of God. So walks that infant mind through infinite wonders; no more wonderful, probably, than those cast around our pathway, but more appreciated, correctly apprehended, resulting in much more rapid and glorious growth of these powers. If occasional phenomena are witnessed on earth, where the less gross and heavy body admits of early and startling developments of mind; if a Pascal or Macaulay or Euler thus flash forth in childhood a brightness which but few ever disclose at the summit of earthly effort, what may it not be where no such entanglements or weights impede the spirit? It must grow if it is conscious, unless God has determined to keep it in eternal infancy. We have no belief that "a babe in paradise is a babe forever." That subjects a third of the human race to practical idiocy, for a child who is always a child is next door to a fool. It must grow if like its parents and like its God. If proof of its capacity were demanded, Christ gives it when he says, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." If the angels of the little ones have that high honor, shall we say that those that leave the earth are shut



up in insensibility? And if they are intelligent they must grow, for spirit, unless hindered from without, will expand; and if it grows, all these favoring circumstances that we have dwelt upon attend it to make its increase one of strength, of beauty, and of glory unspeakable.

Its heart, too, finds there a far more happy field for its unfolding than can be had here. Affection breeds affection, but parental love, however powerful, may be mixed with occasional petulance and anger and neglect, now swelling into excess and sweeping away all proper protections for the safety of its child in its deluge of passion. It must, too, be mingled with error in judgment as to the best mode, the right degree, of gratifying the desires of the child. It is painfully limited in means for a worthy and anxiously desired gratification; and when the babe looks out of the inclosure of parental arms it sees a cold and selfish world, or one, at the most, but slightly, and that selfishly, moved with love toward it. All this tends to breed anger and sullenness, prejudice and selfishness, in it, and it becomes like unto us.

But around it in heaven how different a

society! Its guardians love it with an affection, if not the same perhaps as strong as its parents', and wiser. This affection never relaxes its hold upon its heart, never falls into decay, never swells into distorted passion, never is mingled with fretfulness or anger, never is led astray in judgment, sees what the child really needs, and possesses by the goodness of God abundant means for its supply. While around the babe and its nurse, perhaps its mother, its grandparents, some near earthly relative, and its angel guardian, moves a society, sensible of its value, tender and childlike in all their feelings; that loves and honors and reveres it as the youngest of the works of God; and if last, why not best? Thus they cast upon it influences elevating and gladdening, which fill its soul with speechless love and joy. That heart, that very heart that you felt was yours and that you believed no other could sympathize with nor satisfy, finds more perfect and genial sympathies and more complete satisfaction than it could have found pillowed on your heart; and in the waves of full and glorious feeling it bathes, with an energy ever growing more intense, a

sensibility more and more subtle and deep, a passion pure and perfect and divine.

Finally, it is well with the child religiously. This needs no enlargement. Freedom from impulses to sin, from conscious guilt, from the sense of the wrath of God, from the fear of death, the judgment, hell, no sight of wickedness filling its young eyes with amazement—soon, alas! filling them with delight—no sound of sin passing through and through its soul as if shot in through the ear by him who hurls the fiery darts of death—would not this release alone be proof enough of its superior condition? But to this added the surroundings of its soul there, impulses to holiness, incentives to holiness, acts of holiness, all making sanctity supremely delightful; spirits of the redeemed, sights suggestive only of the awful consequences, not the false delights, of sin; experiences of the saved; above all, the presence of the Saviour, the seeing of his pierced hands and brow, the smile upon his face—these fill the soul with peace and purity. No serpent is allowed to enter that paradise, but angels and the Lamb are the inhabitants thereof.

It remembers, too, its brief experience of

the effect of sin. The two or three moments it spent on earth, it remembers, had much of pain in them. It was sometimes dark there; fires of agony ran through its soul, and when it left it it knows how dreadful were its sufferings. These, it learns, are the consequences of sin, and their memory grows in vividness by the very brightness of surrounding scenes; it therefore, in view of this momentary history, chooses freely Christ and holiness. Like Christ it has never known sin, but it has known its effects. Like him it suffered, yet without sin. Like him it knows its workings in the body and soul as a source of pain, but not of remorse, and though it did not come forth from the struggle in its own strength triumphant as did Christ, it came forth victor through Christ, and with him possesses a free but full hatred of that whose fruit in him was pain and death. Thus the child infant, as if on probation, can voluntarily choose holiness and abide of its own choice in heaven.

Are not these sufficient reasons for rejoicing at the early introduction of human souls into the beauties and joys and purities and safety of heaven? Should you mourn their depar-

ture when you know they are adopted in the family of God, the royal family of the universe? There they play in the paradise of God, they run before the Lamb; while he leadeth his children to the living fountains of waters, they shout and sing and laugh in heavenly innocence and joy around his sacred steps. How weak is our faith when it staggers at these truths, perhaps rejects them as fables not even cunningly devised!

But the goodness and wisdom of God work in us as well as in them in such events. It is designed to teach us the vanity of earth, and thus wean us from it. An adult has gleaned something from earth, and we might say, "Let me live his life, and I shall feel ready to die." But an infant has achieved nothing. If a spirit, a human spirit, one just like yours, can give up earth entirely, cast it all one side and yet live and grow in every faculty of its being, what folly for us to cling to it, to bury our souls in it, to say to this acre or two of ground, this piece of merchandise, this handful of glittering dirt, this fanciful dress, this giddy pleasure, this paltry hour, "Be thou my god," and then to fall before it and satu-

rate every fiber of our spirits with its vile corruption! A little child shall lead them.

That infant who leaves your acres and goods and wardrobe and ornamented rooms and gewgaws as easily and as gladly as it leaves disease and death behind it, let it wean you from the earth. Let it show what it must have, what you must have, for real life, real happiness: the knowledge, happiness, holiness that is in Christ, all attainable feebly and partially on earth, all enduring in death and eternity.

Let it show you the elements needful for your entrance into, your enjoyment of, heaven. Not discontent at poverty, nor pride of birth—both are sinful; the beggar's babe plays with the queen's there. Not greed of gold; gold buys no passports to that world of light. Not love of this world; that passion breeds no love for the world to come. But humility, godliness, with contentment; love of Christ, glowing and growing, working inwardly and outwardly, and bringing the whole nature into sweet and perfect subjection and communion with him. Thus, thus alone can you hope to meet your children. Thus may

God ordain through that babe strength to your affections, your thoughts, your wills, without your reading regretful censure in their eyes. Thus may you dwell with them all your earthly days amid the peace and purity, the glory and love of heaven.

One or two reflections, and we close.

If you have seen the face of your babe frozen in death, you know by painful memories the pangs that sight creates. Others may talk lightly and carelessly; may say a child so young can have wrought itself but slightly into your heart and can be taken out of it without disturbing its natural and pleasant motions. All this is seen far more clearly and truly through the sad eyes of experience. "They laugh at scars who never felt the wound." If but the smallest segment be cut off from the heart we shrink and wither, and cry out in our agony as intensely as though the knife clove its center. It does cleave the center. The amputation of a finger causes as much pain as that of an arm; the removal of an eye more than the sundering of a limb; and you know yet more that these distinctions in loss, though presentable to the reason, are not present to the soul

in its hour of bereavement. You felt, when that eye was plucked, a darkness gather over the face of nature. That star gave forth its serene and blessed light amid the stars of elder birth and greater magnitude that blended distinctly their rays with the central sun of conjugality, and when that star was blotted out a dimness came over the heaven of home, and all things shared in the gloom its loss created, and you say from the heart :

“ The rainbow comes and goes,  
And lovely is the rose ;  
The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens are bare.  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair ;  
The sunshine is a glorious birth,  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.”

This memory may have become dusty with years. It may have been covered, like that infant form, with the dust of earth, but perchance a new stroke falling on a neighboring head may have awakened the soul to sensibility, if it needed any awakening. A new-made grave may open to you your own again. You may go again to the little mound to weep



there. Preserve the memory of that hour of God's visitation. Preserve it as an incentive to holiness, as a preventive to worldliness. If that child had been left with you and had in its growth put forth only the traits which its heavenly education has developed ; if you had seen it by your table clothed with the grace of God, full of meekness, of humility, of love, of wise suggestions and inquiries, shuddering at the sight of the least sin, infected by no craving of covetousness, strivings of ambition, by no hungering for godless pleasure, yet full of activity, of sportfulness, of sensibility to the woes and sins of others, seeing its duties, and feeling in its childish spirit an energy that made it calmly and joyously discharge those duties, rebuking your indifference with a " Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—if as Christ grew at the knees of Mary and Joseph that child had grown at yours—you would have felt the divine influence. Its purity, innocence, cheerfulness, unworldliness, intelligence of heaven—all these angelic traits would have kept your heart green amid the deserts of life, your eye unswerved, your soul heavenward. That babe has such a

character. Through the grace of Christ its education has been at his feet, its nature has put on his beauties, and ere long you will meet that form, not clad in infant robes, but in the garments of a matured spirit, yet bearing in its every feature the impress of the world in which it has been trained. Your child it is, one of your family, feeling the filial bond more powerfully than any yet on earth can, more than you do the parental tie. Take that child into your family. Yet it will sit with you, walk with you, talk, work, mingle perfectly with you, and never stain its garments. Turn it not from your door; shut not your heart in intense worldliness and unbelief against its entrance; call it yours, and let it, as Christ led his father and mother, lead you to the temple, to the cross, to heaven. Keep the grave green; keep the cemetery in the soul where that infant sleeps ever carefully guarded from neglect. Let not the weeds of worldly desire, the thorns of care, the rubbish which gathers upon neglected duty, be found upon that sepulchral spot in your heart. Live with that child, associate with it, and you will find your life growing in purity and knowledge, your company

angelic and divine ; then you can feel the truth of the poet's declaration, a truth written on the reason, the imagination, the heart ; a truth which never would be doubted or gainsayable were we not so gross, sensual, earthly, in all our habits and feelings :

“ She is not dead—the child of our affection—  
But gone unto that school .  
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,  
And Christ himself doth rule.

“ In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,  
By guardian angels led,  
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,  
She lives whom we call dead.

“ Day after day we think what she is doing  
In those bright realms of air ;  
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,  
Behold her grown more fair.

“ Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken  
The bond which nature gives,  
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,  
May reach her where she lives.

“ Not as a child shall we again behold her ;  
For when, with raptures wild,  
In our embraces we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child ;

“ But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial grace,  
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion,  
Shall we behold her face.”

By thus constantly wiping the damps of death from these memories, by thus keeping at your hearthstone the spirits that are with Christ, you will find—

“ That when the stream  
That overflowed the soul has passed away,  
A consciousness remains that it has left  
Deposited upon the silent shore  
Of memory images and precious thoughts  
That shall not die and cannot be destroyed.”

And you whose parental arms have not borne a dead child to its coffin and its grave, have precious lessons of love and wisdom given you by your Parent, the Father of all the living on earth, and in eternity. That son, that daughter, in the dawns of their immortality, may be taken from you. God has left them with you, but he has left with them fearful responsibilities. If he takes them now they are saved. If left, will not your conduct cause their everlasting destruction? No plate of the artist equals that soul in its sensitiveness to impressions. It sees your anger, your covetousness, your neglect of prayer, your abandonment of social Christian duties, your coldness and formality in religion, your warmth and zeal in business or pleasure; it sees, it feels, it follows them all.

Said a gentleman to me once, a man of wealth and the world: "I never felt the wickedness of swearing very forcibly but once. I was riding over my grounds with my little boy, two years old, just opening his lips in broken language; and stopping among some of my workmen I gave vent to my feelings in a profusion of oaths. On coming to another body of laborers the little boy burst out with all of the oaths he had just heard me use. I felt an awful shudder at the sound." Perhaps you swear before your children. What a mode to teach them the existence of God, of Jesus Christ, of damnation, of hell! Perhaps you are free from this sin; but is not your example making them covetous, forgetful of Christ, full of the world, the flesh, and the devil? If God should take them away now and they were saved, would they not bear forever the scars which your sins had inflicted, scars which, but for God's mercy in removing them, would have caused mortal, immortal wounds, and death? Remember, in putting you in that relation he has made your first duty not to provide for their bodies, but for their souls; not to feed them alone with earthly knowledge, but heavenly;

and if you let business, or household duties, or pleasures, or ambition, or any other public or private end, distract you from this, the curse of Eli will be upon you, the agony of David will rend your heart asunder. You may be a great minister like Eli; you may be an able writer and statesman and warrior like David; you may be a keen and successful business man or farmer like Jacob; but if you minister not at your own altar; if you use not your great talents in your own household; if you keep closest watch on your goods and customers and let your family run wild, then shall you cry out here and in heaven, "My gray hairs are brought down with sorrow to the grave!" "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" God in his mercy keep you from such cries! God give you grace to so live before your family, to so guide and nurture them, not by words stiff and formal and rare alone, but by frequent and loving talks on Christ and holiness and heaven, by self-denial, freedom from passion, invective, and slander, by benevolence, by zeal for Christ, by faithfulness at the altar of home, in the class, the prayer room,

the church, at the sacramental table, that you may say when brought to the bar of God, in humility and gladness, "Here am I and the children which thou hast given me."

Finally, that infant's grave addresses the young. From its tiny mound, its pulpit, that late translated spirit speaks to your heart in most audible language: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." The infant comes from God. He is your youngest brother; he is the last messenger you have had from heaven. Let him keep your childhood holy, fill your youthful hours with infant innocence; and as then Christ was with you without your knowledge, now let him be received in your heart and mind, giving you the love and wisdom of heaven. Submit to the guidance of that tiny hand. Said we not, to be men of science we must study nature in her infant form? To know humanity every great philosopher goes to infancy; and going thither you will find man in his truest as well as loveliest earthly expres-

sion. You will find a glad and gay instructor, one who will lead you to solemn mysteries and holiest duties with a heart full of love, of joy, of religion.

“Dearest, to thee I did not send  
Tutors, but a joyful eye,  
Innocence that matched the sky,  
Lovely locks, a form of wonder,  
Laughter rich as woodland thunder,  
That thou might'st entertain apart  
The richest flowering of all art ;  
And as the great all-loving day  
Through smallest chambers takes its way,  
That thou might'st break thy daily bread  
With Prophet, Saviour, and Head ;  
That thou might'st cherish for thine own  
The riches of sweet Mary's Son.  
Boy, rabbi ! heaven's paragon,  
Revere thy Maker, fetch thine eye  
Up to his style and manners of the sky.”

Let the least of the children of God be your teacher, your exemplar. If not from his living, from his dead lips God has ordained strength to your soul. He hath suffered in the flesh and without sin. You are yet in the flesh, perhaps deep in sin. Ere many days, and the feet that carried him out shall be at your door ; a heavier burden of flesh it will be. May the angels that carry your spirit to the judgment find no heavier burden than they



did when but yesterday they bore from your midst an infant soul to Christ! Live the life you now live by faith in the Son of God. His grace will enable you to keep as pure here as if you had gone up to him in your infancy. In these lower regions, like those working beneath the surface of the sea, we may breathe only the air that is above us, that is fitted for us, and drink none of the waters of death around. We may thus gather treasures here for life eternal, and when called up from the darkness and sin of this world may have an abundant entrance ministered unto us in the home of the holy.

“Behold, we count them happy which endure.”—James  
v, II.

“One indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touched a jarring lyre at first  
But ever strove to make it true:

“Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

“He fought his doubts and gathered strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind ;  
He faced the specters of the mind  
And laid them : thus he came at length

“To find a stronger faith his own ;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone.”

## VI.

### ENDURANCE, HAPPINESS.

**H**OW manifold is the idea of happiness! One locates it in repose, another in action; one in peace, another in war; one in the indulgence of appetite, another in the gratification of the higher senses, another in the satisfaction of the affections, another in the exercise of the mind upon its appropriate objects, and yet another in the worship of God.

Among them all the characteristic of happiness that James here speaks of would not find place. Endurance happiness? Impossible! The end may be happy, but not the act. Yet both are true. They are happy while they endure as well as because they endure; happy in the act as well as in the result of enduring; and this because endurance itself is happiness. For all the idea of happiness is one and the same. From the child to the Solomon, from the debauchee to the saint, there is one common ground of agreement as to what they seek. Diverse and contrary as

are the ways they pursue, false and fatal as many of them are, the thing they wish is one and the same. It is the sense of pleasure, the feeling of satisfaction, the subtle something which makes its possessor cry out, "If there be an elysium on earth it is this, it is this."

Now this joyful consciousness the child seeks and finds in his sports, the scholar in his studies, the soldier in the terrific excitements of battle, the saint in his prayers. Yea, more, the martyr finds it in the stake and gallows. Not that they themselves are pleasurable, but duty is, which duty they develop by compelling the soul to meet them in its steadfast march.

On the other hand, even false pleasures have in them a certain portion of happiness. No man would drink fashionable and fatal beverages did they not ravish the taste and exhilarate the feelings. No man would be a debauchee, a theater-goer, a dancer, a gambler, a thief, or even a murderer, were there not a certain amount of pleasure in these forbidden things; in fact, that is the name they go by. Says Byron:

"O pleasure, you are indeed a pleasant thing,  
Although one must be damned for you, no doubt."

“Not only pleasure’s sin, but sin’s a pleasure.” They are sinful pleasures; that is, delights that have a momentary existence contrary to their true nature and relations; that are enjoyed in spite of the will of their Creator and contrary to that will; that are unnatural expressions of nature, and certain, if indulged, to lead the soul to ruin. Yet they have one of the essential qualities of happiness—delight. The murderer who stealthily approaches his victim, who plants his revolver at his unsuspecting head, who sends the deadly missile through that seat of life, has a certain hellish delight in this moment of hellish crime; he thinks he is happy. But these false and wicked counterfeits of happiness employ not our thoughts this hour. Let them howl in their outer abysses like beasts of prey in savage glee over their bleeding victims. We shall not admit them to the glorious company of divine delights whereon the apostle dwells. Nor shall the innocent happiness of the child, the noble happiness of the philanthropist, the lofty ecstasy of the scholar, the unspeakable bliss of home delights, absorb our thoughts; but that happiness only which is found in believing, and

that joy which is in the Holy Ghost. It is those thus happy in the beginning who are permanently happy solely through endurance.

This is so for two reasons :

First, endurance itself confers happiness. It is something for a soul to be sure that it can face a frowning world.

The winter before our war broke out was a time of great cowardice. Never was the heart of the people so like water; never did our knees so smite together. We were dissolved, destroyed, annihilated. What has wrought the change? Endurance. Smitten to the dust by more than one terrible blow, we were compacted, hardened, by the act. We went forth to our work with a more resolute soul and with a steadier endeavor to never give up the struggle till the last armed foe expired, until our endurance was rewarded with success.

Yet those blessings are not our sole rewards. The feeling that we have experienced through this process of pain has been one of growth and strength. In our weakest moments the resolution never to yield to the power of our enemies went through our sinking hearts like

a charge of electricity. It put iron into our blood and steel into our souls. It made our natures granitic. The loose sand of a wild and whirling will became indurated in the vehement heat. In this putting forth of strength, what delight, solid, deep, substantial, has been wrought within us! We have felt that we were changing from youth to manhood, from unconscious to conscious life; and in that feeling has been our reward for our pain and suffering, our weakness and anguish. Out of weakness we were made strong.

The same law holds in human experience generally other than religious. The superiority of the man over the youth is not in his range of superficial observation or of resources of pleasure, but in the solidity of his experience. Endurance of sorrow has hardened the marrow of his soul. Endurance changes the weak, flabby youngling into the self-poised, solid man. It takes the volatile girl, tickled with the latest fashion, smile, or novel, and transforms her into the quiet, calm, resolute woman, faithfully pursuing her appointed way, whatever of storm or darkness cover it. Without such experience true growth is impossible.

Marble is mere limestone until crystallized by fire ; diamonds charcoal till subjected to heat. So the grand, crystallized, luminous soul is he that has walked in the fiery furnace, joyful amid the flames.

This is preeminently true in religion. A Christian who merely takes the grace of salvation as a gift from God, and never has it wrought into his soul by his conscious use of it in the tests of trial, is only a babe in Christ. Thus the apostle treats him. Not a child in years, but experience. However aged, however wise, however versed in worldly affairs, he is yet a babe in Christ unless he has carried his faith through the heights and depths of conscious being, through temptation, affliction, anguish, disease, and death. In this endurance he finds a divine delight. "Is it possible," exclaims that once besotted inebriate, the very sight of a glass setting him on fire, "is it possible that I can look upon the wine when it is red, when it moveth itself aright in the cup, and be its victor?" The very thought is full of happiness. "Is it possible," says that once wretched blasphemer, "that I, who could not utter the simplest sentence without covering it



with profanity as with a garment, whose mildest passion was vented in oaths, is it possible that I can speak with pureness of language and be angry even without sin?" And thus thinking he rejoices in God with exceeding great joy. "Is it possible," says a third, "that I, who once hated the ordinances of the Church, to whom the thought of prayer was intolerable, the class and social worship disgusting, who longed nightly for the theater, the ballroom, the gaming table—is it possible that I can leap to meet the sacred embraces of my God in secret and social worship, that I can steadfastly reject the baits of pleasing ill?" How does his soul crystallize into solidity and beauty and delight as he counts these victories o'er!

But yet more does endurance confer delight. When sorrow bows the spirit down, when distress and anguish get fast hold of him, when lover and friend are put far from him, and his acquaintance into darkness; when riches take to themselves wings and flee away; when parent, companion, or child is snatched from his tenacious grasp; when the earth again becomes without form and void, and darkness and chaos are on the abyss of the soul, then,

if the soul can wait patiently on its God, if it exults in the God of its salvation, if it says, "Not my will but thine be done," how wonderfully do the blessed ecstasies of ineffable peace possess it wholly! How one feels then that endurance is itself happiness! How the knitting of feeling to feeling, of thought to thought, according to the divine intent, and through the instinctive law of the divine working, makes him feel that his nature, which was before amorphic, a conglomerate mass of something, nothing, now vile, now penitent, now sinking, now soaring, now earthly, sensual, and devilish—that this misshapen, unshapen soul is becoming symmetrical! You hold it fast to the anvil, and God is heating and smiting it into forms of beauty. The low is upraised, the earthly is sublimated, the sensual is spiritualized, and the whole nature begins to rearrange itself around the divine center, and its every face to reflect his likeness and image, as every face of a gem does the sun that shines upon it, and out of whose light and heat it became a gem. The thoughts, the feelings, the resolves, the whole being, thrill with the life, express the likeness, of the Redeemer.

Thus the act of endurance breeds instant blessedness. This sense of standing up for Jesus against a flattering and a furious world, against bereavement and desolation—the extreme experience which culminates in that boldest word of Job, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”—itself involves the highest strain of happiness. It is the joy of duty doing, the joy of courage contending, the joy of Christ, that made him move calmly and confidently through the awful trials of his faith. This joy endurance gives.

Think you that our heroic brothers who stood in the forefront of battle, quietly facing the fierce assaults of their foes, were without a sublime joy in that awful hour? Do you believe they ever felt a kindred happiness in the hour of dissipation, of mere pleasure, however pleasurable, of common thought and feeling—nay, of the rarest moment of ecstatic emotion that other earthly experience can impart? So the soul that fronts a legion of devils, that assails them in the name of his God, enduring their fiery darts, their ferocious howlings, their wily flatteries, their malignant assaults, walking like the pilgrim through the

awful valley of death with its legion of devils leaping upon him, fearing no evil, wrestling bravely with the hideous Apollyon, unsubdued and unterrified, even when for a moment he is under his feet—such a soul in that same hour experiences the richest ecstasy of bliss. Then we feel the truthfulness of the poet's profound conception :

“ Poor vaunt of life, indeed,  
 Were man but formed to feed  
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast.  
 Such feasting ended, then  
 As sure an end of men.  
 Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed  
 beast ?”

“ Then welcome each rebuff  
 That turns earth's smoothness rough ;  
 Each sting that bids, nor sit, nor stand, but go !  
 Be our joys three parts pain !  
 Strive and hold cheap the strain !  
 Learn, nor account the pang ; dare, never grudge the throe !”

Second, we count them happy that endure, because thus alone they win, and what they win repays the endurance. No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. The fight, though indurating, is not the end sought ; that is the peace beyond. Our great generals do not believe their highest bliss is

the rapture of the strife, but the calm of victory. So the apostle was not looking at Job in his patience as the emblem of happiness, but in the rewards of that patience. The end of the Lord was set before them as a stimulant to their persistence; but the glory of the Lord was the object that end had in view. Thither, then, turn your eyes. We count them happy that endure, because thus they reach the goal; they win the prize, they enter into that for which they contended manfully. They are partakers of the rewards of heaven.

What that reward is, who can tell? Here we pause. That book of vision is sealed. None can open the book or unloose the seals thereof. No man, however clear his spiritual vision, however strong his faith, can rend this veil asunder. And yet we are told to count those happy that endure, for great is their reward in heaven. That is all; but that is enough. It includes all. It includes rest for the weary body, rest for the wearier soul, eternal love, ineffable peace, all outer, all inner delights, all lowly, all exalted pleasures; raptures of the mind studiously penetrating the highest heavens of thought; raptures of the

heart flowing in ceaseless streams of inexpressible love ; raptures for the senses in the beauty of scenery in country and city, in the melodies of praise and peace, the heavenly harmonies that would create a soul under the ribs of death, of odors that intoxicate with their dainty perfection of perfume, golden vials full of holy odors—of all that can ravish the right though lower movements of our being. And then, far above the objects of sense, of mind, of heart, are those in which they all center—the sight, the knowledge, the love of the Lamb of God. They shall see his face ; they shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth ; they shall praise him day and night ; they shall behold his glory ; they shall partake of that glory.

Well might the apostle count those happy that endure !

If our brothers on the perilous ridge of battle could but have looked forward a few years, or even, it may be, a few generations, and seen the peace, the prosperity, the blessedness of this land, washed of its awful sins, every soul in freedom and brotherhood, in love and unity, we might well count them happy in their endur-

ance then. So if the fainting, trembling, almost wavering Christian can only look forward to that grand future when he shall lay his armor by, when the fierce enemy can assail him no more, when the sinful, carnal nature is laid forever asleep, when life in its fullness, calm, and glory shall flood his toilworn soul—if he can but once get a glimpse of the joy of his Lord, he may well count himself happy if he endure.

Many applications of this doctrine and duty press upon our attention. Consider a few :

First: They only are happy that endure. "Ye did run well for a season," will be said of many a faint-hearted disciple. Yet what avails it if they do not reach the goal? Only that side will be happy that endures to the end. How oft we have seen one enter this battle for eternity! He girds on his armor with buoyant hope. He moves out to meet the adversary with assurance and zeal; songs and smiles around the revival altar escort him to the field; but when the battle begins, when Satan presses sore, when it is not hymns of exultation and warm welcomes of Christian friends that are to sustain him, but a hard, heroic, steady will, a strong, quick, resolute soul, an

eye of faith, an arm of God, then will it be seen whether he will win or not. Not in the prayer meeting, but in the street, is this battle waged; not over your Bible, but with wicked books enticing you to their awful pages; not among your Christian friends, but in the solitude and secrecy of your chamber; not in your hour of prayer, but the hour of business: then Satan masses his legions and hurls them upon you; then you may secretly kiss His hand, then you may fall before him, then you must endure. Only thus and then can you win eternal life. Not he who pushed his bark half across the unknown waters discovered America, but he who endured unto the end won the real, immortal laurel.

Second: You can endure if you will. It is not possible for both sides to win in most struggles; one or the other must go down. It is not certain whether you, my Christian brother, will win. Failure arises from treason, and treason only. God is on our side; he orders the battle; he marshals his forces and summons us to the front. He cannot be defeated; we cannot be if we adhere to him. He is more than all that can be against us. He will give



you strength to endure to the end. You shall be victorious if you trust in him. No storm shall be great enough to wreck your vessel, no foe powerful enough to compel you to flee. Be of good courage, and he will strengthen your heart. You shall overcome and sit down on his throne even as he has overcome and is set down on his Father's throne.

Third: Thus shall we resemble our Lord and Master. "Consider the end of the Lord." What a sight does that spectacle afford—the Son of God condescending to enter the arena and contend with the enemy of man; compelled to listen to his subtle flatteries, to face his intensest fury, to bow his back to the scourgers, to walk amid the fires of hell! But he endures, even to the end, with all its mysterious conflicts unmeasurable by any creaturely instruments. He endures. He wades the ocean, infinite in depth, infinite in storms, an ocean of blood—his own blood. Thus only he mounts the other shores, the green banks of divine deliverance. Shall we fail where he triumphed? He triumphed that we might never fail. Not for himself did he fight and win. "Not for myself," he says, "did I subdue

my enemies under my feet, but for your sake, that you might follow me, fill up that which remaineth behind of my afflictions, and share with me the glory of eternal life."

Be ye followers of God as dear children; be soldiers like your Captain; be faithful unto death, that he may see in you the proofs of his own courage and success, may honor you with his eternal companionship and glory.

Fourth: If you are not of the class that endure, beware! Say not, "I am excluded from this appeal. I have never enlisted, never served, never fought. No charge of effeminacy or treason can lie at my door. No ruin threatens me." Is it so? Is he who tarries at home excused from service? Is he the more excused if he maligns the cause for which he should contend and scorns its patriotic appeals? How do you treat the skulking coward in the time of war? And shall you escape because you reject Christ and his cause? Nay! nay! They that know their Lord's will and do it not shall be beaten with many stripes. They that mock at God's claims, refuse to obey his summons, busy themselves with their pleasures, employments, and sins, cannot

escape his final examination of their conduct. You, too, shall stand before him. To you shall he say, "I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat. I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Ah, my friend, do you wish to hear that word? You will hear it so surely as you neglect so great salvation. Let God be true and every man a liar. God has said, has sworn it. Believe it, believe it! Hasten, hasten to enter his service! Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Persevere unto the end. Face a seducing, a persecuting, world. Be God's now; be his while life shall last, and you shall be his forever.

Finally, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. Ye are thus to prove your allegiance. Repine not if the waters go over your head, if the sword pierce your own soul also, if you are permitted to fill up that which remaineth behind of the sufferings of Christ. Rejoice and be exceeding glad. Thus shall you prove your allegiance, your fidelity, your courage.

The soldiers who stayed with Washington the dreadful winter of Valley Forge—who doubted their loyalty? Who will yours if you say and show your word true: “Though all others forsake thee, yet will not I?” Thus serving, the earthly becomes refined; the agony which may rend your soul brings celestial strength. Under the anvil you rejoice that God is molding you to a vessel unto honor. Between the fuller’s beating flails you feel your vile robes are beginning to glow with a lustrous purity. Tied to the potter’s wheel, whirling, and feeling as you whirl the sharp knife of God cutting out the gross earth, wince not. Shapes of beauty shall come from that biting steel. You shall be carved into divine symmetry; you shall be ornamented with the exquisite figures which his supreme art brings out of the rough clay; and, more than all, shall you be set apart for the Master’s use—the cup of his blessings, praise, and joy.

So sings the poet. Hear his strain:

“ Ay, note that potter’s wheel,  
That metaphor! and feel  
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay.

What though the earlier grooves,  
Which ran the laughing loves  
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?  
What though about thy rim  
Skulls, things in order grim,  
Grow out in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?  
Look not thou down but up  
To uses of a cup:  
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,  
The new wine's foaming flow,  
The Master's lips aglow.  
Thou, heaven's consummated cup, what need'st thou  
with earth's wheel?"

“ I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them.”—Rev. xiv, 13.

“ Her sun is gone down while it was yet day.”—Jer. xv, 9.

“ O mother dear, Jerusalem,  
When shall I come to thee ?  
When shall my sorrows have an end ?  
Thy joys when shall I see ?

· “ O happy harbor of God’s saints !  
O sweet and pleasant soil !  
In thee no sorrow may be found,  
No grief, no care, no toil ! ”

## VII.

### THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE BLESSED DEAD.

WITH these remains before us, once buried, unburied, and to be reburied, of one whom so many here admired and loved, our thoughts flow in a somewhat different channel from what they are wont to do upon such sad occasions. We think how the spirit which once animated this form has been now for more than half an earthly year shining and singing in the glory and the bliss of heaven. She has looked long upon the King in his beauty; she has been led often by the Lamb to the living fountains of waters; she has grown familiar with the sights and society of that celestial realm. What are her thoughts and feelings at this hour of our still-continued mourning? With what calm eyes of untroubled joy she may even contemplate this scene of sorrow. "Why," she may justly exclaim, "why weep for me, who for these seven moons of earth, without the consciousness of a mo-

ment's having passed, have dwelt amid ineffable glories, blessedness, and calm? Why gather over my long-vacated form, over this earthly mold, and lament my heavenly transition? Nay, my friends, look up, believe my glory, and be at peace."

Again we think of the strange fact in connection with these remains. They have once been committed to the grave; under the warm skies of that torrid summer this dust was returned to earth. There it has lain for many months slumbering sweetly beneath the roses. Again has it appeared from its grave and been borne across the wild rolling seas, seeking a pleasanter home in its native soil. The white sheet of winter covers the earth with its pall, and the wandering body will gladly sink to its rest beneath its frozen covering. See the sad-freighted vessel working its weary way against the hostile billows.

"I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night,  
I see the sailor at the wheel,  
I see the cabin windows bright.  
"Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And traveled men from foreign lands ;  
And thy dark freight's a vanished life  
And letters unto trembling hands."



It moves slowly forward as if it were, as it is, a hearse, and drops its anchor in quiet waters, by the side of the busiest and noisiest haunts of men.

Thus comes the dead again from its grave. Not as in the days of Christ at his summons to be re clothed with mortality, not as in the hour which is coming at that same summons to be clothed with immortality, but with its grave-clothes still about it, with its corruptible seeing yet no incorruption, with no light leaping out of its eyes, no color flushing its pallid face, no life making it rise up and walk. The grave is here yet, with all its horrors, with all its darkness. We have brought the charnel house into the house of God. We have moved the tomb into the temple. The funeral train passing from grave to grave halts at this altar, but not to hear authoritative words of life spoken into its dusty ear. No Christ stands over it with this recreative word. It is for the living, not the dead, that it is here. For us, not for itself, doth it pause here on its last journey and allow us one glimpse at the couch where the sleeper lies, ere it enters its final chamber in the silent halls of death.

Pausing thus in our sorrowful presence, what may we so fittingly dwell upon as the words John heard out of heaven? With everything that addresses the sight appalling; with a face of love already changing into the earthy mold, out of which it was compacted in radiant beauty and life; with a seven months' residence in the grave, giving to it a far more deathly character than they wear who are moved from the couch to the coffin, and are thus to our sensibilities more among the living than the dead—this body has dwelt among the tombs. It has so long since left this upper air that it has ceased to be esteemed as one of its inhabitants. It has become a companion of the dead more than of the living.

To rise above the depressing feelings which such thoughts create, to take even these long-dead remains in the arms of faith, to fill these long-sightless eyes with more than their earthly brightness, to make these long-silent lips musical with more than their former melody and love, to fill this long-inanimate form with celestial vitality, we must turn from it to the word of God, we must listen with John to

the voice from heaven, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

How that word broke upon his ear in that rocky isle amid the pains of exile and brutal banishment! In a den far worse than that which confined Bunyan, while his eyes were also unsealed to hardly less divine revelations, with heathen tortures of every grade of cruelty, from the most brutal to the most subtle and severe, the aged servant of Jesus Christ is comforted by visions more sublime than has ever before unveiled their splendors to mortal eyes. He saw the wonders of heaven and hell; he looked down the future of earth and beheld as in a mirror the conflicts and conquests of the cross; he pierced the thick folds of the grave and triumphed over this last enemy, hearing through ears of flesh the sweetest sounds of heaven. He had been in the midst of most contrary visions. Now he looks, and lo! a Lamb is standing on Mount Zion with one hundred and forty-four thousand around him, their foreheads glowing with the divine name, their harps and voices pouring forth the new song with a volume, a majesty, that no human ear can hear or heart conceive. Again the

vision changes, and an angel is flying in the midst of heaven scattering the everlasting Gospel like divine manna over all the earth; and yet another properly following him, who declares that the diffusion of the Gospel has resulted in the destruction of Babylon, that great city which had made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; and then his successor appears proclaiming the unending torment of the worshipers of this false beast, the murderers of the holy and the just, who shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb; and then, as if this dreadful sight made him flee in horror from the vision, he sees no more the ascending smoke of that torment blackening the skies with its gloom, he hears not the unutterable groanings of those who have no rest day nor night. Another voice comes stealing through the smokeless ether—a voice most musical, that might “create a soul under the ribs of death”—“falling like a falling star” from out the heavens, and sinks into the becalmed heart of the seer. “I heard a voice from heaven.” That voice is full of authority as of sweetness. It

says to the hearer, "Write!" Take that stylus and record what I command thee. Not for thyself alone, but for hearts the wide world over and all time through that are widowed for my children whom I have taken from their arms. "Write!" that every suffering saint may feel courage in enduring his great fight of afflictions. "Write!" that a light above the brightness of the sun may shine upon every holy grave. "Write!" that every tempted soul may be thus incited to resist his enemy. "Write!" that every fascinated sinner, led away of his own lusts and enticed, may fear the hour when these words will not gladden the hearts of his survivors, and may flee to Him who alone can make his dead body as his living soul lustrous in the light of eternal life. "Write!" "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Even now, saith the Spirit, when persecutions rage the fiercest, when death in its most violent and dreaded form rushes upon us like beasts of prey—even now, answers the Spirit, in response to the voice, as if a duet were being sung in heaven: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

With such a voice from heaven dropping its

distillment into our ears and hearts, we may pleasantly, even among the darkness and dissolving nature, dwell upon the inspiring theme—the blessedness of the dead that die in the Lord. Why are they blessed?

First, because they rest from their labors. Here is incessant, painful toil. John felt in his aged body the aches and infirmities of his long life; his hard life when a youth as a fisherman; his harder life as a footsore wanderer in company with the Son of God; his later and severer labors as a preacher, an itinerant, a sufferer at the hands of his foes and even of his brethren. How his worn-out frame looked forward to rest! Ours are less subjected to outward hostility, yet not less subjected to toil and weariness. We, too, feel the need of this blessedness. Earth is a state of toil, heaven of rest. Earth makes its dwellers keep their life within them through the sweat of their brows; the inhabitants of heaven possess theirs in an unconscious tide flowing down from the heights of life eternal. All over the world man and woman must rise to hard and ceaseless work. Burdens lie heavy on every shoulder, “for man must work and woman must weep.” If a few,

a very, very few, fortunately escape the condition of physical toil, they do not escape that of work. The mind of the merchant is more worried than that of his clerk. The general is more severely taxed than his musket-bearing soldiers. Black care rides behind the officer. The governor is the hardest-worked man in the State, the president in the nation.

But chiefly is this labor spiritual. We contend not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. How severe, how unceasing, is this labor, ever contending against an unsleeping foe! With our souls attent at every assault, watching and warring, we must spend our earthly days.

Last, and not least, are the labors we discharge for God and his Church. These were doubtless chief in the apostle's mind. Our Christian life is one of Christian work. Much of it is performed only with the hardest labor. Against the calls of weary nature we often come to the worship of the sanctuary with a worn-out body; we drag ourselves to these heavenly duties. Our Christian life in all its phases is work. There-

fore we look forward to the hours of rest, and cry with one who has now found the boon she sought :

“ For my heart that erst did go  
Most like a tired child at show,  
That sees through tears the juggler’s leap,  
Would now its wearied vision close,  
Would childlike in His love repose  
Who ‘ giveth his beloved sleep.’ ”

In contrast with this weariness heaven smiles upon us, a place of rest. “ They rest from their labors ” is the first element of that celestial blessedness. Toil of body, mind, and heart, toil against sin and self and Satan—these are changed to spontaneous, unwearied, invigorating exercises of soul and spirit. The lower services in which we may then engage are infinitely easier than the easiest we here perform. No play on earth is so delightful as the meanest work of heaven. No outrushing of human love upon its object is so unconsciously self-conscious as the lowest exercise of heavenly passion. They rest from their labors. They move out on every line of life like the light that streams fleetly and untired from sun and star. The service of song, of study, of ministration of the saints, of contention with



the devil and his angels, of simplest thought and swifter love, whatever form and expression that infinite life assumes, it is without weariness, without toil. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors."

Yet again are they blessed because their works do follow them. Every one on earth desires such a competence as will secure him an income after he has ceased from labor. If it were told you that you could obtain by diligent labor a fund which would be a constant source of support to you through the unlimited and unknown ages before you, it seems as if every one would hasten to secure such a treasure. Yet such an opportunity is offered you. You may so invest the energies of soul and body that they may supply your soul with new life in every hour of that coming eternity. How the work of Abel has followed him! What myriads have felt the strength of that example and been sustained in multitudinous temptations by his brave resistance of temptation at the cost of his life. So have the works, and so still do the works, of Moses follow him, and those of Abraham, and those of the proph-

ets and apostles and martyrs. The faith of Paul, the love of John, the penitence of Peter, are exhaustless springs, and even seas, that not only refresh the generations of earth, but their own souls in heaven. Good deeds can never die. Death hath no dominion over them. He who performs them wins for himself the power of endless life. However obscure, however ignoble he may be, however humble his service, he has opened a fountain whose waters fail not. Like Alcæus, which from its native isle flowed through the salt sea fresh and sweet, and bubbled up in the higher and wider lands of the continent, so does this deed of yours, this act of faith and grace and love, flow from this little islet of time under the salt sea of death and break forth in brightness and refreshment on the boundless highlands of eternity.

Other grounds of the blessedness of the righteous dead rise before us. They see His face and his name is in their foreheads. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither doth the sun light on them, nor any heat, but the Lamb which is in the midst of them doth feed them and lead them to living

fountains of water. They dwell upon the mysteries and marvels of redeeming grace. They fly on errands of mercy

“From star to luminous star,  
As far as the universe wheels its flaming spheres.”

They recline beneath the trees on the banks of the living river, holding converse such as no mortal may know; a depth, a fullness, a sweetness of love that poet never fancied nor love felt. Above all is that all-embracing word—they see His face, and their joy is full. “All my friends will be there and Jesus will be there,” were the dying words of one who has now these five years been with him where he is.

“They sit around his gracious throne,  
And dwell where Jesus is.”

O, the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord!

Two thoughts conclude our remarks:

First, the brevity of her life does not prove that life unfinished. A miniature may be as perfect as the full-sized picture. “That life is long which answers life’s great end.” The end of life is to fear God and keep his commandments. A completed life is one rounded with a perfect faith. No true life, in one sense, can

be complete here or ever. It is a line, not a circle; a line of infinite extent, along which the expanding soul unwearily travels. But an earthly life, though brief as a summer's day, if it exhibit the graces of Christian faith, has accomplished its mission. Christ exclaimed, at the age of thirty-three, "It is finished!" Paul cannot say the same until seventy winters have withered his frame, and even then with a far less sense of completeness than was felt by his Lord and Master after three years of his ministry. Abel finished his course early, Methuselah late; Stephen died young, John in the total decrepitude of exhausted age; John the Baptist was a youthful preacher when suddenly summoned away, Peter went trembling with years to his cross and crown; John Huss ascended in his chariot of fire while still in his early prime, Polycarp carried the weight of eighty years to his triumphant death. So will it always be. "Her sun goeth down while it is yet day," will yet be said over many a maiden's coffin. "He dies in the flower of his days," will yet be placed on many a headstone. But, long or short, if you have given your heart to Jesus, if you have served him with a hum-

ble and steadfast mind, your life will have a finished beauty that all will admire and long to imitate. Your name will be as ointment poured forth. Your friends and foes shall alike arise and call you blessed.

But, again, remember that only those who die in the Lord have this blessedness pronounced upon them. The dreamy ears of John caught no words saying unto him, "Write, Blessed are all the dead, for all die in the Lord." Nay, there was silence as to many—a silence how deep, how dreadful! It is a night of impenetrable darkness. A flash of light falls on a single spot; it not only makes that spot the brighter, it makes all else the darker; the gloom is the thicker by contrast with that radiance. So the grave is covered with a pierceless pall. Heavy, thick, solid as a mountain of coal, stands this black wall of death. A light comes glimmering sweetly from the heavens and rests upon some graves; through the churchyard you see these glittering mounds. But that light only makes the unilluminated graves the more awfully dark and dreadful. No brightness there! Alas! alas! how great is that darkness! "Where

shall the wicked and the ungodly appear?" "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." What is their fate who do not thus die? No light upon their faces, none upon their graves, none upon their futures. We cannot say this doctrine is of human device. Here is a confirming word out of heaven. Nay, here is the originating and establishing word. Man would save all loosely and indiscriminately, as criminals would never punish criminals. God from heaven declares the difference. What a difference! How unutterable! How awful!

Let this picture hang in the gallery of your memory with that ever-increasing company of those you have known and loved in the flesh, that have put off the earthly and put on the heavenly. Among them all shines His countenance more marred than any man's, who gave them the grace by which they triumphed over death, sin, and hell, and are forever resting and rejoicing in the heaven of heavens. So may we serve and wait that when our hour comes we too may smile upon the fatal messenger, cast ourselves gladly into his once fearful arms, and be borne to the glorious company who

have washed their robes and made them white  
in the blood of the Lamb!

“Then weep not, if you love her, that her tedious toil is done ;  
O weep not, if you love her, that her holy rest is won.  
There should be gladness in your thoughts and smiles upon  
your brow ;

For will she not be happy there ? Is she not happy now ?

“And you will learn to talk of her ; and, after many years,  
The tears which you shall shed for her will not be bitter tears ;  
When you shall tell each other, with a fond and thankful pride,  
In what purity she lived and in what peacefulness she died.”

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”—John xii, 24.

“ The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outred  
All voluptuous garden roses.

“ The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Through the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevailed,  
Shall find the toppling crags of duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God himself is moon and sun.”



## VIII.

### THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER.

DEATH itself is rarely serviceable to the living. The testimonies of the dying may avail for our warning or comfort. Their mode of meeting the last enemy, their looks and words as they pass into the shadow, may have influences baleful or blessed upon the survivors; but this is the service the ever-living soul pays to the anxiously peering soul. It is not from the death itself that any virtue goes out; that is still a "cold obstruction," imparting no life to the living. It is yet a masked battery that must be assailed and subdued. It is victory over it that gives it all its value, as battlefields are famous not because of themselves, but because of the deeds done there. Nay, more; it is like famous fortifications subdued, that silently commend their conqueror. So death in the Christian ordinarily is only made to praise its destroyer. But there are some instances in which it can be turned to absolute benefit. The dross becomes gold, the foe becomes

friendly, the battery is turned against itself, death is the seat of life. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

This occurs in only one instance among the innumerable modes of earthly departure. Only one can be said to fulfill the conditions of the text, the dying grain that brings forth much fruit: it is when death is voluntarily surrendered for the sake of the truth.

One may die ever so patiently and submissively. The mother may unclasp her dying arms from her babe and calmly leave her nursing to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. The husband may submissively resign his companion to the harsh embraces of the world. Every such sort of tender resignation to inevitable fate is touching, is religious, is valuable in itself. But the stroke that compels such submission is without vitality. As well say that the block, or the gallows, which occasions the heroism or saintliness of a Mary A. Rowland, a Jane Grey, an Algernon Sidney, or a John Brown, is itself praiseworthy as to say that such endurance of fate makes the fate itself honorable.

Here as elsewhere in all questions of morality, voluntariness is the vital center. Had not Christ said, "I lay down my life for myself," his submission would not have subdued death and led captivity captive. It is because of the freedom, by which, being able to live, he chose to die, that his death was fruitful.

But this freedom must be exercised for high and holy ends, else it is even more ignoble than compulsion. If one says, "I have power over my life, I hereby take it away," his name is cast out as evil, second only to his that violently snatches away the life of his neighbor. His life is his, not to destroy, but to preserve. He can sacrifice it only at the especial command of God. If this command gives him the privilege of obedience or disobedience, sets before him death and life, and says "Choose ye," at the same time impressing most upon his conscience that the choice of death is agreeable to the divine will, then his acceptance of death not only casts a flush upon that pallid face, not only clothes the ghastly horror with a momentary loveliness not its own, but transforms it into a creature full of life, bestowing of its fullness unto all generations.

Such a death is the martyr's, when the utterance of a single word, one prostration in the house of sin, or, as in the case of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, the high court of the ancestral faith, silence alone, will secure liberty and life; and when the soul, rising superior to the fears that confront it, and even consenting not merely to the surrendering of an arm or the out-plucking of an eye, but to the entire destruction of the body, willingly and prayerfully lays this great sacrifice upon the altar, surpassing Abraham's courage in that it raises the knife, not over another, but over himself—such a soul exalts death into honor and power and makes it bring forth much fruit.

Into this kind of dying came the self-sacrifices of our soldiery. Not that the ordinary deaths of soldiers, even when volunteers, have this high and faithful nature. Thousands of Americans hastened to Mexico professedly to avenge our nation for insults or to wreak payment for defaulters, but really to enlarge our then enormous slave empire. The volunteers in such a cause, though unto death, gain no divine laurels. No more do the men of the

South who so freely cast themselves into the arms of destruction and laugh at its approach. They are volunteers of him who is the father of death. His wages, as his servants, will they receive. In eternal dishonor shall their names shine forth. Men who, for the sake of a lie, perpetuate the most fiendish system that has cursed the earth, overthrow the most beneficent government that ever existed, gain full charter for every unbridled passion, that they may indulge not in momentary rapine and lust, as the French myrmidons in the sacked towns of Mexico, but, with an unceasing, universal hideousness of crime, devoting one third of their people to the purpose of traffic and the more hellish purposes of passion—such soldiers, however brave, can have no honors from man or God if, under the impulses of pride and profligacy, they hurl themselves against the balls and bayonets of righteousness and liberty. Mere voluntariness of self-sacrifice does not insure the divine and abounding vitality which Christ commends in word and act. It must have in it the martyr element. Without this it is nothing, or worse than nothing. With this it is instinct

with life. Our soldiers are substantially martyrs. They are a sacrifice freely offered for the salvation, not of the law alone, but of right, of justice, of piety, of Christ. They are akin to Abel, who clung to the right at the cost of his life; to Isaiah, who laid his life upon the altar of principle; to the apostles, who counted not their lives dear unto themselves; to millions of faithful ones who have resisted unto blood, and who rejoice that they were counted worthy to fill up that which remaineth behind of the sufferings of Christ.

How do these deaths produce life? Looking at them we can easily see how those of our soldiers shall have like fecundity.

Their deaths were productive of life by the firmness and consistency which they imparted to the principles they advocated. Principles are mere emotions unless compacted by action. It is easy to talk virtue; the difficulty is to act virtuously. This difficulty arises from two sorts of foes, the outward and the inward. The latter is the fort to be attacked. We must conquer ourselves. Virtue must sit sovereign in our souls. Then come the inner-works; we must fortify our virtue against the

seductions and against the assaults of Satan, It must take flesh, be revealed in life and action. If attacked, it must resist. If offered death or dishonor, it must say calmly, but resolutely, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" If Satan will not get behind, but leaps upon and seeks its destruction, it must still say, "Thou canst not prevail over me, O mine enemy." If then its enemy and God's casts it into prison and makes its feet fast in the stocks, if it is hated even to death, in those hours virtue is in a rapid state of crystallization. The inchoate and filmy mass of resolves and desires is become strong, hard, and brilliant as the diamonds of angels. Virtue becomes a pillar of salt, not a type of vengeance and backsliding, but of savor, of glory, of health, of life to all generations. How the world casts reverent eyes on Stephen with his uplifted face smitten alike by the stones of his murderers and the glory of his Redeemer! Never will it cease to paint and carve the tired but resolute Madonna, the youthful Sebastian shot through with many arrows, the flayed Bartholomew, the roasting Lawrence, the beheaded Paul, the crucified Peter, and, above all, Him who trod

the wine press of the wrath of God alone, whose pierced head and hands and feet and side bear testimony to his sufferings and endurance. These bear witness to the strength of grace; they are characters cut in the crystal of the New Jerusalem. In them death is transfigured. Its fearful aspects are lost in celestial beauty, its devouring destruction in abounding life. Whoever studies them feels the stirrings and strengthenings of the divine power they shoot forth. Life and the despairing soul of the struggler, or the dead soul of the supine, alike awake and arise under their stimulating presence.

Thus does death, when voluntarily suffered in behalf of principle, become the very center and author of life; thus does the repulsion become attraction, its weakness strength, its deformity beauty. Even its sin, of which it was by nature the wages and consummation—for sin when it is finished bringeth forth death—under the mighty transmutations of grace becomes holiness itself. So that death is no more death; it is life eternal. That is the hour and the power of light; that reveals the glory of virtue; that changes the black and burning



coal into the white throbbing diamond. We wear the jewel of such death over our hearts as our chief ornament. We proudly set it on our foreheads, "Death baleful and horrible!" Look there! See the glory of that dying. See that concentration of principles. That soul was offered release on conditions of simple obeisance to idols of present popularity and power. It scorned deliverance on those terms. It hastened to meet the threatened punishment, and lo! the victim becomes the victor. Pain becomes pleasure, death is made alive.

How mightily doth principle grow and multiply in such ground! The black lava becomes a fruitful soil which nourishes the richest of all the vines of Europe; whose wine, so rare, is called by the seemingly profane name of *Lachrymæ Christi*, or tears of Christ. Is it not a prophetic rather than a profane name? Does it not teach us that the most deadly soils, the very waves of the lake of fire and brimstone, under the influence of divine shine and shower, can become as the garden of the Lord? that indeed the tears of Christ, patient and steadfast unto death—a dreadful soil—distill exquisite balsam for every fainting

soul? Thus is death fruitful when voluntarily embraced for the sake of truth.

But such death is life because of the zeal it imparts. It is not only a life revealer, it is a life imparter. We behold, we feel, the energies of such victories. As we walk this gallery of the real Cæsars, conquerors of themselves and sin, we feel that they confer upon us their gracious powers. They walk with us; they descend like the angels into the garden to strengthen us in our great agony. How Paul, in prison and approaching death, must have been fortified with the animating calmness and courage of Stephen! How later worthies have been upheld by the vigor of their earlier leaders! The heroes of faith enumerated in the eleventh of Hebrews, who out of weakness were made strong, have moved millions of kindred souls for like fierce encounters. Every Frenchman was a Napoleon in the day of his power. So was every Englishman a Wellington. So was every American a Washington. The idol of the age reproduces himself a millionfold on the reduplicating mirror of the human heart. Thus doth principle embodied in sacrifice spring up and bring forth fruit a hundredfold.

Who reads the heroic life of Judson that does not say, "Let me live such a life of the righteous?" Who gazes upon the cell of Huss, or the green grassplot where he completed his struggle and victory, that does not exclaim, "My soul would be alike faithful unto death?" The places where the good man meets a violent fate are vastly nearer heaven than the quiet chambers whence he is called to God. These are shrines of power; they recreate the souls that visit them. The center of an Oxford street where the fires curled around Cranmer's head and Latimer's form; the little cattle-penned market place of Smithfield, with its ever-burning altar, where the sacrifice of Rogers, and hundreds of other victims, is ever consuming and never consumed; the spot where Paul showed that his counting not his life dear unto himself was not a vain boast, and where Peter was girded by another and carried whither he would not, yet did not refuse to go—these, scattered over the earth, are the ever-blooming gardens in what would otherwise be a wilderness of dry bones. They make man's life seem something—be something. They feed the wasting soul with strength and

joy. We eat of their faith and are made strong. We drink of this divine brook in the way of our pilgrimage and lift up our heads.

Thus does the incarnation of principles in the last and mightiest trials of life change the whole character of death itself and make it the highest of the revelations of human strength. Out of the dead lion comes forth the reviving honey; out of the awful darkness breaks forth the illustrious morning; out of the unutterable weakness leaps unutterable strength; out of the very offspring and product and even divine punishment for sin rises the perfection of beauty, holiness, and power. The truth spreads and prevails in the very act and article of its seeming overthrow.

Thus is it in the principles involved in this struggle and the hero martyr in which they are embodied. Though these principles are not the complete and highest expression of revealed truth, they are its lesser and vital embodiment, and if the testifiers of the fullness of the Gospel even unto death minister to the eternal salvation of man, no less do these who bravely lay down their lives for the political

and social regeneration of the race. If we look at these principles, we shall see the saintly service of their advocates.

We have dwelt on the great principles involved in this struggle because we do not class the death of him whom we have gathered together to sympathize over among those who fall by ordinary casualty. It was not by accident or disease that he perished; not by an unknown and indiscernible visitation of God, but by a clear and conscious sacrifice of himself, as much so as was that of Stephen or Paul. He enters the list of those who, Christ says, "lay down their lives." Has he a right to the honors of martyrdom? That depends on two points: First, were the objects for which he died such as God especially approves and for which he calls his servants to offer up their lives? And, secondly, was he himself a conscious and willing servant of his Lord and Master in the highest duties and services to which he summons every soul? The first, we have seen, is such that God approves. If there was ever a war justified in heaven since the war that occurred there when rebellious angels sought to break up its union and annihilate its

authority, its liberty, its virtue, that war is the one we are waging.

If any lives were ever justly sacrificed upon the bloody field of battle, then are those we have poured forth in that category. Did Zwingli fall for the defense of Protestant liberties, with the approval of Heaven upon his course; did Ziska and Gustavus Adolphus and the Elector Frederick and a great multitude of adherents give their lives rightfully for the redemption of Germany from the yoke of papacy; did Cromwell rightfully kill with fire and sword absolutism in England; did our fathers plant themselves, with God's blessing, upon Lexington Green, at Concord Bridge, and at Bunker Hill? then do the patriot soldiers of this nation serve God in their heroic sacrifice. They seek the perpetuation of liberty, its extension, its consolidation. They die for the dearest and grandest of human rights that can be conferred upon man. They are and shall ever be enrolled upon the holy list of martyrs to principle, to truth, to God. But are they saints, worthy martyrs and confessors of a worthy cause? That depends upon whether they personally accepted and served the Lord

Jesus. Many have been slain in a good cause that were not good men. Millions followed Moses into the wilderness seemingly accepting God as their Lord in preference to the idols of Egypt; yet we are told God was angry with them and slew them in the desert because of their unbelief. It will not do to let down our great principles of religion any more than it does our principles of liberty, though these seemingly stand aside for the moment. A wicked, profane, drunken, licentious soldier who dies in battle is not an heir of heaven, though he offer himself freely for a noble cause. Mercenary or baser motives may prompt his conduct; and if the motive is noble, the conduct must also be, if he would be crowned lawfully in heaven.

Our friend had joined the army of Christ before he did that of his country. He had served his Lord before he did his general.

To us remain certain duties which we must not omit to mention. We must cherish the memory of these patriot souls. They give their lives for us. They seek to save this nation from destruction. They seek to inaugurate the era of human brotherhood. By their deaths we live. Let us not forget them. We

should erect monuments to their honor; we should frequent their resting-places; we should dwell upon their virtues; we should tell the story of their valor to our children and children's children; we must also emulate their patriotism. They gave their lives. What give we? They are martyrs. Are we worthy to be their friends and brethren? Are we selfish, cold, timid, contentious, groveling? or do we let their spirits raise ours to their own exaltation? Remember for what they died. If they did not see all the great truths involved in this struggle, they did the chief. Their souls thrilled with the loftiest enthusiasm. They were caught in the inspiration that moved like a whirlwind divine over the whole land. How they were lifted up and borne forward through pain, and hunger, and peril, and battle, and bloody death! How that flag that lolls so spiritlessly before your careless eyes stirred their souls with divinest fire! Let us feel the mighty impulse that possessed their souls. Let us dedicate ourselves to the great ideas for which they laid down their lives. Let us carry forward this truth—the brotherhood of man in Christ. It may be that many a bloody hour shall pour its



rain on us before that blessed morning shines. It may be that we shall be called to follow them into the conflict and the consummation. Let us not fear to follow where these lead. Let us, too, be willing to die for the salvation of this land, which is the salvation of all lands.

Our heroes leave the country they die for, the commander they fight under, the comrades they fight with; but 'tis not so with Christ's soldiers. They go to the country for which they fight even in dying for it. They see and serve their great Commander forever. They meet their old comrades in arms, and rejoice with them to all eternity. In heaven's armory they hang their warworn weapons. Above the throne waves their rent and riddled but triumphant flag. Among its gardens they are instantly and eternally healed. Seek now, now, that glorious service. Dedicate yourselves to Christ and your country, to truth and to God. Be a witness for it with your tongue and your life, and, if it be the will of God, seal it with your death. Then shall you enjoy the honours in earth and heaven that shall ever be paid to martyrs for the cause of man, the cause of God.

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.”—I Cor. xiii, 12.

“Calm on the bosom of thy God,  
Sweet spirit, rest thee now;  
E'en while with us thy footsteps trod  
His seal was on thy brow.

“Dust to thy narrow house beneath,  
Soul to thy rest on high;  
They that have seen thy look in death  
No more may fear to die.”

## IX.

### THE ENIGMA SOLVED.

WE have all seen beloved souls pass through the gates of exceeding suffering and of death into the city, the city which hath foundations of eternal solidity, whose builder and maker is God. As we have beheld them treading that path of agony unattended by any earthly friend, as we have seen the spirit writhing in its house of torture, and finally, after days of struggling, escape from its dungeon, our thoughts cannot help following in speculation the path along which they moved after emerging from the exhaustive pains of the valley of death. And thus the question arises, one of the most frequently and earnestly asked, "What is the state of a departed spirit?" It has been asked by many here when the waves of bereavement have flooded their hearts. It is asked by all who are aroused from the stupefying power of this present life to a recognition of the life to come. Is this a forbidden question?

Does God say to our curious spirits, standing at the gates of death, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther?" Has he created such a fence, dropped such a veil, between this world and the next that of it we cannot catch the least glimpse, strain we our eyes ever so tiresomely? Is even to guess at the fate of the departed, sin? Every irrepressible, God-given, and God-blessed affection denies this to be his will concerning us. Every onward running thought of our minds confutes it. Every instinct of our nature permits, nay, demands, its indulgence.

The language of inspiration conspires with these aspirations of our nature and is full of references to the state of departed spirits. It presents the condition of good and bad. From Job the eldest to Revelation the youngest of the Scriptures, God the Holy Ghost has brought before immortal man more than hints, even gives direct and unavoidable testimony as to the state of the dead. Christ in his parables, his reproaches, his discourses, presents it. We have no controversy, then, with those who make this a subject of examination. We do not believe the paths of speculation are forbid-

den if we tread them with reverent feet, with a recognition of the only source of knowledge on this subject, the word of God illuminating the nature of man; and with a recognition also that the only object for which these disclosures are made is to lead us to see that the essential evil of man is sin, and his chief work to obtain Christ and holiness.

Ought we to allow a solitary thought to wing its way into those unknown skies? Should we launch our bark of speculation on those untried and shrouded waters? We have answered. If our flight conforms to the known properties of those spiritual heavens, we shall not, like Icarus, find our wings melting from us and ourselves dropping into the sea of earthly wandering and death. If our vessel follows God-given charts and stars and compass, we may make the isles of the blessed, visit in a degree that undiscovered country, gain some knowledge of those coasts that are nearest the earth, of the condition of those inhabitants that have lately landed, through the surf and amid the rocks of death, upon its peaceful shores. "For now," says the apostle, "we see." "We see," indeed, though it be through

a glass, darkly; or, as this ought to read, we see as in a glass, guessingly—in an enigma is the very word used, in a riddle, in a guess. The mirrors that they used were of steel and brass and water, and as the reflection in these is dim and dark, yet perceptible, so is the reflection which comes to our eyes as we look into the future world; and as the figure which we see is a reflection of ourselves, so the portrait we draw of the state of the departed soul is a reflex and image of our own state here, the representation of the essential features of our spiritual nature in its new conditions of being.

We shall not startle you, then, with novelties or discoveries. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "I was caught up into the third heaven, and saw things which it is not lawful nor possible to utter." We know nothing which has not been known from the foundation of the world. We can only sift the few grains from the barns upon barns full of chaff which the silly though half-pardonable dreams of man have raised

and garnered. The Hindoo, Indian, Moham-  
medan, Papal, Mormon, Spiritualist, Univer-  
salist heavens we pass by, with all the stuff  
that dreams are made of, which are found  
in otherwise evangelical writings, and ask the  
question, What does God in his word and  
in our Christianized consciousness reveal to  
us as to the state of our departed Christian  
friends? We say "Christian," as we wish not  
to look downward now. We would stand gaz-  
ing up into heaven. We will follow, so far as  
he permits, those who die in the Lord. We  
will see as in a dark steel mirror, guessingly,  
the beloved soul who is in the bosom of the  
Father, who is led by the Lamb by the side  
of the still waters, in the midst of the green  
pastures of glory.

There is much of our present selves that we  
do not see herein. Our bodies are all blotted  
out of that looking-glass. Our bodily surround-  
ings, clothes, food, houses, lands, sceneries,  
cities, animals, trees, factories, railroads, books,  
pictures—none of these can we see, even ever  
so dimly. We may guess as we will, there is no  
foundation for our guesses, no answering of these  
human things in the glass of heaven. They may

be there; they may not. We know nothing; we have no right to believe anything about their being there. We do not see in this glass many of the inward experiences which we see in any mirror that reflects our inward earthly state. In the glass of heavenly life no face of agony is seen, no sigh or tear dims its surface, no hunger, or thirst, or sleep, or weariness, or sickness, or sorrow, or pain, or death; none of the grosser appetites, none of the unpleasant experiences of the soul here, are stamped on that mirror. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." As you gaze into the upheld glass you see no wan face pinched with poverty and hunger; you see no bowed Rachel weeping ceaselessly, refusing to be comforted; no frame twisting and tossing with the rackings of unspeakable and unendurable pain; no face clad in the ghastly and repulsive features of death; all these have passed away, blessed be God, have passed away forever!



As you look in that glass you see not the reflection of the tempter. The sneering, scowling, flattering fiend does not stand at your right hand as he does if you look aright into the glass which portrays your present nature. No besetting serpent sin coils around your heart there, stealthily poisoning its sweetest and most secret juices. Pride, vanity, lust of the eye, lust of the heart, unbelief, carnal-mindedness, dislike of duty, are the legion of devils which beset and surround the heart of the best Christian, which are present to his eyes whenever he sees that heart, and which possess partially the hearts of most of the disciples and make them timid, time-serving, and half-hearted Peters and Thomases; all these vanish from that speculum. The soul of heaven has no such features upon or around it.

What, then, is left? Much; all that is valuable and enduring. Wisdom, love, holiness, everything needful for an eternal journey, an eternal abode of progressive blessedness. We shall not attempt to combine these elementary faculties of our nature in their heavenly forms nor measure their heavenly development. Under what forms and degrees love exists in

these, how can we realize? Under the light in the currents of eternal vision and influence it must swell beyond all power of human suspicion or fancy. The sweeps of imagination, the swift and vast reaches of reason, the height and length and depth and breadth of love, what mortal tongue can tell, what mortal nature conceive? What then, again we ask, is left for us in this glass? What did Paul, what may every one, see?

First, a consciousness of being alive. If not conscious, they must be either asleep or dead. None believe them dead. None, it seems to me, can rightly believe them asleep. The body, it is true, is said to sleep, and so intimate is their connection, so certain their reunion, that the Bible, as a book eminently human, speaks sometimes of our being asleep: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;" "Those also who sleep in Jesus." But these are explainable in the practical oneness present and to come of the soul and body. There are other passages which cannot be explained except on the ground of the conscious life of the departed. "To depart and be with Christ;" "There appeared Moses and Elias talking with him;" "I am the God

of Abraham. . . . God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ;” “ I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets ;” “ This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” In every vision of the Revelator\* where the departed souls are introduced, they are awake and active, walking, flying, singing. We believe, then, the Scriptures teach that the heaven-gone spirit is fully aware of its being alive, as conscious of its life and all its attendant motions as when in the body. Aye, as much more conscious as the heavenly, disembodied state is superior to its earthly, flesh-walled condition.

We see in this mirror a continued love for their earthly friends. “ Hearts are just ; hearts’ loves remain.” The last motions of that heart were toward the dear ones that gathered around it to behold through raining eyes its departure. That father, how she yearned toward him ; that mother, how devotedly she clung to her ; that husband, how his name lingered last on her lips, as he agonizingly struggled through the engulfing waters of death to grasp her ; that child, how it sat strong and immovable on the parental heart while other loves foundered and went down !

And shall we say that as soon as this heart has escaped the body it ceases to love? Away with such blasphemy against these sacred affections! If God loves us in our earthly state, shall we from the base of that throne whose summits are the fountains of such affection, forget and cease to love our earthly friends? If Christ loves the Church on earth as much as that in heaven, shall we, when we have presented there the certificate of our membership below, signed by the Master and Head, and been admitted to its fellowship and duties, find ourselves void of all interest in, or love for, those we have left behind? God forbid! That soul in heaven is as full of love as when it beat on the heart of reciprocated affection through the thick folds of flesh. How happy would your child have been could it have had you accompany her through the gates into the city! How perfect would have been your partner's bliss in receiving and obeying the summons of the Master could you have had an invitation too, and so gone to the marriage supper above, as you had to many on earth, hand in hand, heart in heart! This feeling is not interrupted, broken asunder by death. It is modified, per-

haps, but not weakened. The loved ones there love you as fondly as when those frozen lips shot forth so feebly the last fires of their love on your tearful cheek. But you may say, "If they are so loving and interested, will it not affect their happiness not to see us and be with us?" We answer, If they know we are serving and loving God, they will be content, in view of the exceedingly brief space which shall elapse before we shall be with them "where He is, and our joy shall be full." If you would leave your house for a happier one with but little regret did you know the rest of the family would follow in a few days, if you would wait in unalloyed content the return of a loved one who had left the room but for a moment, how much more should the angelic soul, though full of love and desire for your presence, be calm, in view of the exceeding brevity of the time before your arrival, compared with the eternity you will spend together! You can measure the time between leaving the room where your beloved is, and instantly returning, as a definite portion of your life, but the interval between your entrance into heaven and that of the last of your earthly friends,

though it may be scores of years in length, you cannot measure on the line of the eternity which shall follow that reunion. Hence, the beatified ones, though full of love for you and longing for your society, are not pining because of your absence; it is so brief, so immeasurably minute, beside the eternity with which they are constantly comparing it.

But, again: you may say, "If this affection does not breed those sickening longings in them which it does in us, though our love for them is almost infinitely less than theirs for us, will it not make them disturbingly anxious for our salvation? Will not their sensibility of sin, their knowledge of its consequences, their knowledge of our peril, make them uneasy in their heavenly repose? If the parents of the most wisdom and piety and love are the most anxious for the fate of their child, how shall they not be tossed with the fever of fear in their vision and feelings, in view of our sinfulness, in view of the entirely Christless life of some of their kindred?' I answer, We make nothing by saying that because this is a necessary accompaniment of conscious life and love here, therefore there is no love without it

there. Does not Christ live? Is he not blessed forever? And yet is he not full of anxious affection for his earthly children? Need the parent enjoy less religion because his son is unconverted? The souls in heaven, like those on earth, like Christ's, like God's, may, must, by purity of nature, feel these fears; yet they know each person has his destiny in his own hands; they know God is doing all he can do to save them; they know, for they hear him, that Christ is interceding for them; they know that the Spirit is going to them, that every power of God is engaged for their salvation, and if they refuse they refuse for themselves; they alone must bear it.

So knowing, so feeling, it does not make them miserable to see the sinfulness, to fear the failure, of those left behind. They may sorrow, but still they rejoice; they may say even in heaven, as Paul did on earth, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," and yet say, "I rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks." The other view dehumanizes the saved soul. To make him ignorant and careless of us, singing and shouting entirely

indifferent to our fate, full of conscious life yet totally paralyzed in all the nerves of earthly regard, because these nerves may thrill with anxiety and fear as well as delight, is making him less than man; is making our spirits, like the spirits of beasts, go downward rather than upward when they leave the body. It is enough for a servant to be as his master; and if Christ is anxiously active, yet calm in an unspeakable joy, if angels rejoice over a penitent sinner, hence must sorrow over an impenitent one, then these latest born into heaven may be full of active love for us, though that does bring with it anxiety for our salvation and sorrow for those who are impenitent.

This objection is from the common root of all heresy, namely, that it is impossible for love to endure the presence of sorrow. God cannot endure sorrow, some say, therefore he is going to change it all to joy. God cannot, others say, therefore he is going to put out of existence those whose character can only result in sorrow. Departed friends cannot, hence they do not know anything about us. Our cure for all this is man's free agency. Self-responsible, with all the powers above and



beneath crowding around him, he moves on his own track to heaven or to hell. We love, angels love, God loves him, but his way we cannot control. We will love him, God will love him, though he makes his bed in hell. But this, because he is master of his own fate, and follows his own nature, shall not rend our hearts with incurable sorrow.

A query arises under this head, natural but not necessary: "Do these loving friends commune with us?" We are apt to say they do.

"Oft the forms of the departed  
Enter at the open door;  
The beloved, the true-hearted,  
Come to visit me once more."

We see them in our room, at the grave, in our dreams, in our hours of temptation, in our hours of sin, in our hours of victory. Therefore we say they are here. This is the keynote of the success of Spiritualism—the impression that our friends are round about us, and our desire to have them near us. Do you find this reflected in your mirror? we ask St. Paul. No response is returned, no hint that this is the case; not one. No such image, it seems to me, is drawn upon the true glass which

gives us shadowy hints of the departed. There are ministers sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation—unto no others. Remember, these lately gone may be appointed for that work, and they may not be. We have no ground in reason or revelation for asserting this to be a fact; we have ground for asserting they are somewhere and together. “In my Father’s house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” John saw them all together—a multitude that no man can number. If in a place, then they are not scattered over the earth; they are not forever abiding in this gross and lower air, full of colds and heats, storms and darkness, sin and corruptions; they are where John saw them—in the paradise of God. I see no warrant for believing them to be always near us; I see many things against it. One is that we should fall into the absurdity of our friends who call up the spirit of Webster, or Swedenborg, or some other worthy, in a

hundred places at once, places hundreds and even thousands of miles apart. A medium is profaning this sacred hour in Boston, probably, another in New York, another in Chicago, and so on in a score, possibly in a hundred, places, professing to embody the spirit of Washington, Lincoln, Franklin, or some other departed person. We should be like them if we believed our brother, or sister, or child, or mother, present with us at the same time that other relatives miles, perhaps milliards of miles, away believed they were with them. I see no ground for this impression. They are interested in our course; they may be aware of our state; but this is more likely to be through the information which souls leaving us for them shall carry to them than through their own personal oversight. As friends are ever ascending from our side to theirs, so, like news brought to us from absent ones, by those going from us to them do they ever learn of our prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, faithfulness or sinfulness, rejoice as they hear of our approach to them, in the training of our hearts in grace, and in the good, though to us painful, providences of God. This is the farthest we can

legitimately go ; this we can fairly, scripturally, rationally conceive ; all beyond is fable, having, perhaps, some basis of fact, perhaps not.

One question may come in here, often asked and answered, yet still asked : " Shall we know our friends when we reach heaven ? " Did Paul see this darkly ? This is one of the urgent cries of our hearts. Out of our darkness, out of our sinfulness, we plead for light here. We cry with the poet,

" Shall I know them in the sphere which keeps  
The disembodied spirits of the dead ? "

Is there any ground for hope ? It seems to me no hope that does not belong to salvation itself is better anchored than this. Did not that peculiar nature that has but lately left you, a soul unlike any other in your family, go in its own unchanged nature to God ? Has not its memories, its loves, its thoughts, its whole being, passed thus to him ?

Then when you meet it, your soul, which grew to it, like a double cherry that is parted, and yet though parted is united, shall as easily recognize it as your face would its face. Yea, more easily. For heart sees heart, love

melts into love, as much more quickly and surely than face detects face, as spirit is superior to matter. Did not the three disciples recognize Moses and Elias? Does not every redeemed one see and know the Lord Jesus? Did not Abraham and Lazarus become acquainted? And if you can become acquainted with others, how can you help knowing your own kindred, your own heart and soul? No doctrine that is not declared in so many words in the Bible is, in my opinion, better established than this: we shall know each other in heaven.

But, again, to return from these obstinate questionings to clearer revelations. The redeemed souls we see as in a mirror are greatly interested in the cause of Christ. They may be interested in other good things, progress, prosperity, purity, freedom, intelligence; but of these we know nothing. These may be so small and trivial as not to awaken any especial interest. They are but for a moment; they are soon abandoned. Slavery, poverty, sickness, all will be cast off soon. But religion, the success of the Gospel of Christ, the salvation of sinners, the spiritual prosperity

of the Church, these things the angels desire to look into. They rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. They are ministering spirits to the Christian or are intimate with those who are. They know for what Christ died, the value of heaven, the deliverance from perdition, the redemption of a soul. How their experience magnifies this work! As you, when you became a Christian, felt a wonderful enlargement of heart in these matters, as you love the Church and are unspeakably anxious for the salvation of sinners, so they are as much more devoted to this chiefest work of God as the experience of heaven is more than the experience of earth. Much as they may love their relatives, they will love the Church more. That is the ark on the mighty waters of iniquity, that the pillar of fire in the night of universal sin and death, that the only visible instrument of salvation. For this they pray, to upbuild this they would gladly leave the glories and the rest of heaven. That this is the fact every redeemed soul can see, not only darkly, but with the clearness of noonday.

Finally, they see and love Jesus. Whatever doubts overhang the lower relations of the

translated Christian, no cloud settles down on the summits. If they forget father and mother, they do not forget Christ; if they know not us, they know him; if they cease to love us, they cease not day or night loving and praising the Lamb. In the conversation of heaven they will ask, "Did Jesus descend from the throne of awful glory where he now sits? Did he lay aside that glory, leave that throne, march through those endless ranks of angels, down, down, down to me? Didst thou, O God, my Saviour, go through all that poverty, that infamy, that servitude, that friendlessness, that shameful, that awful death? And all for me—me, so weak, so wicked, but now—so full of unbelief, of pride, of murmurings! How dare I look upon thee? how shall I dare to praise thee?" It hardly seems but that there must be weeping then when these visions and thoughts possess the one new born into that kingdom. Ah, yes, they shall see him as he is!

" They shall fall at his feet,  
And the story repeat,  
And the Lover of sinners adore."

They shall gaze and gaze and gaze to all eternity on Him who loved them and died to

redeem them, to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

These, then, are the features of that portrait which Paul saw in the mirror of heaven. These are all we can positively affirm under the light of Scripture and reason of the inward state of the redeemed—conscious existence, love for the friends they have left behind, love for the Church on the earth, love for Christ; all other exercises of their nature are entirely problematical. Their employments we cannot talk of without having too many ideas which are solely material and hence totally unadapted to their nature. Their rest is no such repose as we think of. The Christians who struggle through the last agonies are at rest in all that conflict in their souls; and the sinless calm, the deliverance from temptations and doubts and fears, is all the rest we can properly ascribe to them. The ranges of their thought on themes of salvation we know nothing about. We know a few letters in that alphabet, but the language, the oratory, the poetry, the philosophy, the music of that theme must all be left to the unrevealed life of heaven.

Are you among those into whose dwelling



the white-winged messengers have come? Have you seen the eye of the saintly beloved lose its luster of intelligent affection? Have you heard that loving voice, "like a bell with solemn sweet vibrations," grow fainter, fainter, fainter, and then cease? Have you been possessed with queries and doubts as to their essential life and love now? We show you the glass of Scripture, the picture of inspired reason; they live, they love, they love you; they long for your sanctification; they await in a sacred flood of peaceful bliss your ascension to their seats; they may join their prayers to those you send up for your consolation; they pray for your salvation if you are yet in your sins; the whole force of their regard runs in this holy way for your redemption, for your purification.

If you are a Christian, let these be comforts, stimulants, to your soul. Believe God's word; believe the express declaration of Christ; believe the workings of your sanctified heart, and let your life conform to this belief. Live so that you shall satisfy them if they are permitted occasionally to visit you; live so that when any saint ascends from your side to

theirs he may gladden their hearts with tidings of your faithfulness; live so that when you follow their shining footsteps others may see your robes in the transfiguring glory of that hour, white as the light, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them, and they may reclasp you to their hearts with a recognition of as great progress in you under the limitations of earthly feebleness and temptation as in them in the full freedom and force of heaven.

And if you are not a Christian, be careful how you let dreams of a future life blind you to the true character of that life and the true way of obtaining it. Dreams, it is an old and true saying, go by contraries. Your sleep is full of realizations of wealth, of beauty, of fame. You wake to poverty, deformity, ignominy. The devil plays this trick on the slumbering sinner. He has gorgeous dreams of heaven, its luxurious ease, its easy entrance, its voluptuous enjoyment, all the stuff that is found in multitudes of journals and of books of this day, chaff of sleep, with not one grain of true wheat in its swelling heaps. "As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when

thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." Yes, every image you see or hear in this glass of futurity that does not see salvation by faith in Christ and by works of righteousness which his grace alone has enabled you to do—every such image is a delusion, a lie. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Ask yourself as you see the souls of beloved ones wading through these waters, ask yourself the solemn question of the poet :

" Into the Silent Land !  
Ah ! *who* shall lead *me* thither ?  
Clouds in the evening sky more darkly gather,  
And shattered wrecks lie thicker on the strand.  
*Who* leads *me* with a gentle hand  
Thither, O thither,  
Into the Silent Land ?"

Soon you must go, soon will the tides of life flow less and less along those vehement nerves of yours, those tensioned muscles, that ceaseless soul ; soon you must lie down helplessly and let the stern foot of Death trample out your life with whatsoever measure of agony he chooses to mete out to you. Soon you must be drawn into that awful machinery, and, like the raw material in the grasp of its

iron masters, your ragged and worn-out body will be seized, regardless of all your struggles and shrieks, regardless of all your bribes and tears, regardless of your wealth, your beauty, your wisdom, your duties to your family. It will drag you between the crunching rollers, through its twisted, rending wheels, and you will come out—what? Essentially the same as you went in. With every outward feature changed, every inward characteristic will remain. If your nature had Christian love and Christian grace as its second and eternal character, *that is there*, transformed in the lustrous, living perfections of heavenly life. If it is not there, the shapeless mass assumes the horrid features of a fiend. The restrained nature asserts its sovereignty. Christ gathers to himself those that are his! Satan claims and stamps his own! He who manages and moves, he who hath the keys of death and hell, who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth—he assigns these diverse products to their appropriate storehouse. “They shall come forth,” he says, “they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, they that have done evil

unto the resurrection of damnation." May we cry mightily and ceaselessly unto God that he may give us that holy, that divine love and life that shall brighten and strengthen as the darkness and helplessness of death increase, that shall make us to burn and throb around his throne.

Then, then the mirror will be changed. We who can but dimly see parts of ourselves in this glass now, who see these parts as in the blurred plate of the photographer, with no apprehension of the new developments that may be made after the picture is taken, with no knowledge of other expressions and powers not there revealed, shall then see face to face, as a clear glass reproduces your exact form. As a magnifying glass presents your enlarged features, so then clearly, intelligently, largely, shall you see yourselves. Now we know in part, then we shall know even as we are known. We shall apprehend all that we are apprehended for of God ; we shall see our nature as in its vastness and minuteness ; we shall see ourselves as God sees us. What a promise ! Do you believe it ? Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as

God is pure. God grant that we who grope after these elementary truths in the darkness of earthly ignorance, and amid the storms of earthly sorrow, may follow the true and sufficient though feeble light he has given us; may not be blinded by the false lights the flattering and bewildering enemy has kindled all around us; may walk steadfast in the way of penitence and prayer and praise; may awake in his likeness; may see these stars of night which we have watched and followed, while others have filled their drowsy souls with seducing dreams; may see them fading into the dawn of death, into the sunrise of the heavenly morn, into the blaze of everlasting noon!

## NOTES.

I. This sermon appeared in the New York *Christian Advocate* January 6, 1881.

II. This sermon was written February 19, 1849. It was first preached at Amenia Seminary, New York, March 4, 1849. It was afterward preached at Wilbraham, Mass., February 26, 1854; Roxbury, Mass., February 20, 1857; and Cambridge, Mass., September 9, 1860.

III. This sermon was preached at Amenia Seminary in May, 1848; at Roxbury, October 24, 1858; Cambridge, April 29, 1860; and Malden, Mass., April 5, 1863.

IV. This sermon was written at Malden on Friday and Saturday, October 14 and 15, 1864. It was preached the following day, October 16, 1864, at North Russell Street Charge, in Boston, Mass. It was preached at Bennington Street, East Boston, in December, 1864; Winthrop Street, Boston, January 9, 1865; Tremont Street, Boston, March 26, 1865; Fitchburg, Mass., May 25, 1865; Bromfield Street, Boston, August 10, 1865; Clinton Street, Newark, N. J., November 12, 1865; Maine, August 16, 1868; Westfield, Mass., July 11, 1869; and the Baptist church, Malden, June 27, 1869.

V. This sermon has the following note prefixed: "Sacred to the memory of Georgie (Georgie was his firstborn), who died Monday eve, June 12, 1854, at 7:40 o'clock, and was buried Wednesday eve, June 14, at 5 o'clock." "This sermon was commenced Thursday afternoon and finished Saturday afternoon." It was preached at Westfield, November 17, 1856. The lines that precede the sermon were affixed to the manuscript as a "dedication."

VI. This sermon was written at Malden, Saturday, October 1, 1864, and preached at North Russell Street, October 2. It was also preached at Roxbury, September 11, 1870.

VII. This sermon was "written on the occasion of the re-burial of a young lady who was one of the first that went forth to teach the freedmen soon after the capture of Port Royal, and whose remains were borne back to Boston after lying some months in the grave."

IX. This sermon was written in Roxbury on the occasion of his sister Anna's death, which occurred Saturday, May 23, 1857, at 3:30 P. M. The sermon was "commenced May 30, at 10 A. M." "I wrote till 4 P. M., and finished it Sabbath morning," his notes tell us. It was the "first sermon read after Mary's ——, April 22." So the notes read. Mary was his wife. He was rarely able to speak of her death.









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